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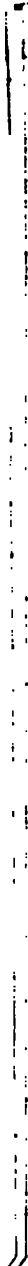
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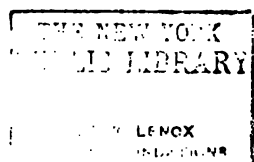
**JOHN BULL,**

**UNCLE SAM AND JOHNNY CRAPAUD.**



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"A SOCIETY AFLOAT."



JOHN BULL, UNCLE SAM

AND

JOHNNY CRAPAUD.

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BY

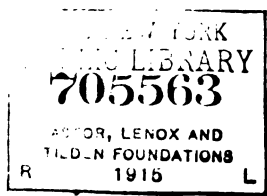
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NEW YORK.  
HENRY G. LITTLE  
1888.

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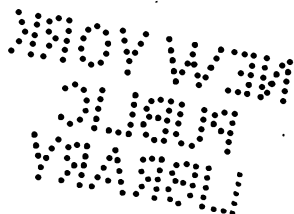
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## INTRODUCTION.

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### A VOYAGE.

PERHAPS the most thorough literary training of the day is that acquired in the cabins of our steam packets.

For this reason it is that traveling conduces more, at present, to further general information than it did at any previous period.

Our fathers were unacquainted with this school of learning; but what we lack in general knowledge is supplied by a sail up or down the Saone, Rhone, Rhine, or a trip by sea.

As had been my custom for several years, I had just quit Paris for a time, and taken passage aboard a steamer bound for the Mediterranean. We were fifty passengers, and, as inclination moved us, sat, lounged or stood around between decks.

A grave gentleman, sipping his coffee, smiled occasionally over a newspaper which he was reading.

"He is reading \* \* \* by \* \*," observed a young man in a blouse; "I am reading the same work myself; but I am two numbers behind."

"Well, I subscribe to that journal," said his friend, "and will receive my copy, *poste restante*, at Valence."

"I read that romance with an unusual degree of interest," interposed a lady in a green veil; "it is one of those novels that I like."

"We are, then, altogether of similar tastes," said a slender bald-headed traveler. "My favorites among romances are those that enter into the family circle; those that furnish us with a genuine picture of actual existence, that 'hold the mirror up to nature,' chasten our vices and lessen our defects by sketches from real life. I regret that LABRUYERE never wrote a novel."

A young fellow with his hat *à la Giotto*, who was traveling to China, cane in hand, here took up the conversation in a spirited tone:

"I don't very well understand what pleasure you can experience in the perusal of that in books which you are yourselves doing at home. With all their extravagance, the Chinese display far more good sense; their dreams, their fancies, the vagaries of their imagination, are the only subjects which they deign to paint, engrave, sculpture or embody in writing. Whatever savors of a routine existence, they deem vulgar and unfit for reproduction. You French, however, are curious to see in the books of your boudoirs, upon the tapestry of your bed chambers and your mantel screens those identical scenes which, stifled in your ridiculous European costume, you are, yourselves, enacting. The designer of your curtains must work into them a nurse with her tiny charge, a village wedding, the departure of a recruit for the army, the *ménage* of a newly married couple, a father cursing his

son, a little miss at the piano entertaining her parents, a landlord removing the effects of an insolvent tenant into the street. In this way you enjoy the satisfaction of being able to rehearse, in your *salons*, the story of your tapestry. To speak of my own tastes, I intend, while passing through Lyons, where I shall sojourn for five days, to order four paper-drafts representing as many scenes in the planet Saturn. The designs were drawn for me by EUGENE DELACROIX, at Paris. These I will dispose of at Pekin for a ridiculously high price."

"But, sir," observed a traveler with a serious air and a bad cold, "are you acquainted with what is passing in the planet Saturn?"

"If I did know what was transpiring there I would refrain from reproducing it," rejoined the Chinaman: "for that, again, would be the burgher and real life of the Saturnians."

"Ah!" ejaculated the serious passenger; and he coughed violently.

"Young people entertain ideas of . . . young people," remarked an individual who was almost asleep over the head of his cane; "what I look for in a romance, is fact, an illustrious historical event, something, in fine, which, as BOILEAU says, instructs while it amuses me; for, honestly, what profit will you derive from a work of pure fiction—from the perusal of a long lie, to put it briefly?"

"Why, amusement, my dear sir; that is the profit," said the Chinese traveler.

"Yes," replied the sleepy gentleman, "but amusement is not information. Now, I, myself, sir, got my history of Scotland from SIR WALTER SCOTT."

"And I," said the lady in the green veil.

"And I, also," added her husband.

"You see, sir," continued the gentleman, "that everybody here is of my persuasion."

"You believe, then, in Walter Scott's histories of Scotland?" asked a Parisian, tipping the ashes from his cigar, as he entered the cabin. "Ladies, allow me to inform you that it is raining on deck . . . the histories of Scotland are fables in a fog . . . not unlike every other history, for that matter. To whom, sir, are you admitting this? Why, sir, I, myself, have at Paris witnessed three histories and two revolutions beneath my very windows, and have met them upon the street, as I meet you here. I have, since, read twenty works treating of these same events. Each account contradicted the other nineteen, and all differed from that which transpired before my own eyes; would you, then, have me with this experience put any faith in what occurred three hundred years ago in the fogs, caverns and snows of Scotland? Nonsense!"

The serious traveler raised his arm, as if to get a hearing, but his words were choked by a fit of coughing.

A rather elderly lady, who was watering a spaniel from her drinking glass, took up the conversation:

"I," she said, "find no relish for any but romances like those of M. Montjoie, written in the form of epistles."

"Never heard of M. Montjoie," said three young men together.

"How old are these gentlemen?" asked the lady with the spaniel.

"Thirty, like every body else," replied one of them.

"M. de Montjoie," continued she, "wrote in one thous-

and . . . . one thousand . . . . eight hundred . . . . and something. He is the author of 'The Four Emigrants,' 'The Manuscript of Mount Pausilippa,' &c., &c.; all in letter form. I read his works after leaving the academy."

"What I want," said an enormous fellow who was tired listening, "is your broad pleasantry; the farce, for instance, or a heap of side splitting nonsense to kill time on a rainy Sunday afternoon. See here, do you want to know the romance to my taste? It is that one by . . . help me a little . . . a droll fellow . . . I have the name on the tip of my tongue . . . that book in which a chap with as much brains as a goose that is married to a pretty woman . . . and there is another, a young cadet, called . . . something or other . . . names are a perfect pest to me! . . . I bought this book when I entered the army, and afterwards gave it to my cousin, a widower with no children."

"Why is it that now-a-days nobody writes a romance about knights?" asked a simple lady, who was going to Algiers to join her husband.

"About what knights?" inquired a flippant youngster, twirling his hair.

"The knights who jousted in the tournaments and marched to Palestine."

"Stuff! they'll do for the servants of clergymen!" said the young fellow.

"I have a cousin who is an author of romances," said a mysterious lady; "you probably know him, gentlemen, but I refrain from mentioning his name; he writes extensively for the papers. Now, he can compose nothing but tales as gloomy as mourning. I have sometimes remon-

strated with him: Alfred, my friend (I have known him from his childhood), why are you everlastingly grinding out these dismal stories? One would think you were in the service of an undertaker. . . . At this, he would laugh till he cried. . . . But it's his nature. With his comrades, he is as jolly as the next one; but as soon as his pen touches paper, your tears begin to flow."

"Well, that's a style of romance I detest," said a jovial young agent, who was traveling for a large madder house. "In our business, to use an example, a man must always have something pleasant on his lips; we are obliged to do a great deal of talking with our customers. We often dine out, meeting married and single ladies, who ask whether we have read the latest by so and so? and confound it! if the thing is as dismal as a shroud, we lose all relish for dessert. What we look for is something in the shape of love tales, some amusing incidents of gallantry, or a bit of ridiculous nonsense. Why! the other day, at Lyons, I disposed of goods to the amount of twenty-seven thousand francs at a discount of only two per cent, on the strength of a comical domestic adventure which I related from the newspapers."

"However, that is not what the age calls for," said a professor of philosophy, who was on his vacation trip: the times are serious. A romance is a distraction for us; we read it for the same reason that we listen to a grinding organ in the street—because it diverts us. There are a number of light-minded individuals who seek, as they say, to kill time, but for the vast majority of artisans, thinkers moralists and men of industry, time is not a thing to kill, but to dispose of to the best advantage. As

to myself, I would exchange all the romances in the world for a single page of BANKS, SLOUDES, KRAMM or STRAUSS."

"The gentleman speaks well," muttered a large red face beneath a black silk hat.

"What is a romance?" pursued the professor.—The passengers gathered around him.—"A romance is a lengthy falsehood. And what is the moral effect of a falsehood? A depraving one. Here, in two words, is the estimate of a romance. You follow one of these romantic adventures, become interested in an imaginary unhappiness, and squander the treasures of your sympathy upon what? What, I ask you, do you reap from this lavish outlay of sentiment upon fancied evils? . . . Hardheartedness. To-morrow, when positive evils loom up at your side, and real misfortune surrounds you at every step, you have not a tear to shed, your interest is cold, your charity gone. The fountain of your sympathy has been already exhausted."

"The gentleman speaks with reason," said the mysterious lady.

"Certainly," said the traveler to China, "and will continue to speak with reason, if he is allowed to proceed."

"You are at liberty to refute me, sir," said the professor, with a side glance and a sanctimonious smile.

"Nonsense, sir," said the traveler to China. "Is anything refuted now-a-days? Everybody is right, everybody is wrong. There are tastes and fashions which are all the rage and which will continue to prevail, for all that anyone can say to prevent them."

"So much the worse!" answered the professor.

"So much the worse! you say, but about you a million of men and women cry: so much the better!"

"All well and good, sir; but in morals, opinions are weighed not counted. What you say is vain; you will not change the nature of the times; the age is a serious one."

"Yes, it is serious!" cried the Chinaman with warmth; "the age is serious, because it is unwilling to smile over the pages of 'Lucy; or, the American Heroine.'"

The professor grew pale.

"This is a tale by the gentleman himself," continued the passenger for China. "My friend here, Livraison, the book-agent, has just been whispering this bit of information into my ear."

"Well, if our conversation is to degenerate into personalities, I shall refrain from pursuing it."

"There was no personality intended, sir. Are you or are you not the author of 'Lucy; or, the American Heroine?'"

"And on the supposition that I am, sir?"

"It is no supposition; it is a fact, sir."

"Have we not all some youthful indiscretion to deplore?" said the professor, with an air of contrition. "It is at twenty that we set about testing ourselves, that we begin to question, to look around us before irrevocably fixing upon our vocation."

"You are then the author of 'Lucy; or, the American Heroine! . . .'"

"My good sir! How much ado you make about this trifle!"

"When you published 'The American Heroine,' the age was a serious one. You printed it in 1871. At that time you were thirty, and had read BANKS, KRAMM and STRAUSS."

"That is possible, sir, very possible."

"Here is an analysis of this 'American Heroine.'"

"It appears to me that this pleasantry is growing somewhat stale;" said the professor, with a learned laugh.

"Lucy," pursued the traveler, "is a smart, frisky, young country lass, whose coquetry is the plague of Eccentrictown. She lays siege to the hamlet. The mayor, a justice of the peace and a captain of the militia are the only members of the corporation who dispute the city with her, and they are determined to force the young heroine to raise the siege. Lucy holds out remarkably. Two hundred smitten lovers have sworn that, before they lose their treasure, they will bury themselves beneath the ruins of Eccentrictown. Here follows a number of more or less slippery adventures. Lucy is, finally, crowned *comme rosiere*, and does not marry. My modesty forbids my entering into the details of this romance, which was written for the most serious of ages. You can form your own judgment, gentlemen."

During the *résumé* the professor went out on deck.

After the question of fiction had been exhausted, the conversation turned upon the rise in the Orleans railroad stock.

The ladies fell asleep and I became profoundly occupied with serious reflections.

Leaving Paris, I had promised my friend Confiant a romance, which was to appear in the columns of his paper.

What sort of romance should it be, was the question which was agitating my mind during these conversations on board the packet. You will readily conceive with what interest I followed the discussion of this "society afloat." I listened to each speaker with an eagerness that was quite natural; for here was society in miniature, enlightening me by its counsels.

Five plots in embryo and a number of subjects occurred to me.

At one time, a romance of chivalry was uppermost in my thoughts, with the scene laid in Palestine or Bretagne, which, for my purposes, I would call Armorica. At another, I thought of a story with a single gloomy hero, complaining of the ingratitude of men in general and of one woman in particular. Again, I preferred a *roman bourgeois*, with its gentlemen dressed like ourselves, and talking, acting and marrying like everybody else, between Chaillot and Bercy.

I was quite perplexed ; I could fix upon nothing ; decide upon nothing. For a moment I thought I could make something of the cavaliers ; but the reputation of Madame Cottin frightened me. How could I outnumber or even approach the thirty-five editions of "Malek-Adhel?"

I addressed myself to the young Chinese traveler, and said to him : "I beg your pardon, sir. If a friend asked you to write him a romance, upon what character of fiction would you settle? Excuse my abruptness ; but you are, I think, a man of taste, and I would be only too happy to follow your counsel."

"I am on my way, sir, to China," he answered, "with the express object of writing a Chinese novel. There is, it must be admitted, little that is diverting in the real life of Europe, and I cannot enter upon the composition of that for others in which I find no amusement myself. I would essay the impossible did I attempt to portray the sentiments of mortals, whose monotonous existence is one long trudge with clog and umbrella through the mud of our northern towns. Others may reap a harvest in this field,

but I will never enter it. Perhaps, sir, these observations may prove a service to you."

"I thank you, sir. Our ideas are not a little alike: and where two entertain similar thoughts upon any subject, they are prone to feel strong. However, I must acknowledge that my taste as a reader not unfrequently creates in me an enthusiasm for the romance of real life, or for those phases of contemporary history, whose scenes are laid amid the clouds and smoke of our large cities, and which have been sketched with an admirable charm, by the most gifted pens of our own day. During the last fifteen years, twenty of these magnificent volumes have appeared, with different signatures, and failed to attain to the glory of master-pieces, simply because they were not written in Dutch or English."

"What you say is true, and I understand that your taste as a reader is at variance with your inclinations as a writer."

"You will understand this more fully after a short explanation. Among the other defects which nature has suffered me to inherit, is an extreme laziness, and an utter dread of cold weather. When an editor honors me with a request for a romance, my first thought is for some warm climate in which to establish my family and where I may enjoy life beneath the genial sunlight or the tepid shade, with my women and children—imaginary of course—about me.

"By the end of the first chapter, I become the dupe of my own illusion, and find myself quite evidently at home between the tropics or under the equator. So far am I made the creature of my own fancy that, frequently, I

have neglected to build a fire in January, when upon every page I find myself talking of bananas, acacias, cactus, nopals and aloes, together with tigers, elephants and lions.

"In this way also I economize in flannel and wood; and a labor of this description, by amusing me, triumphs over my constitutional inertness.

"Further, in my writings, I am an egotist; I have my favorite heroes; and to the larger animals, especially, in the midst of their vast landscapes, I am very partial. In Europe, the dog and the horse figure prominently in fiction; and they certainly possess their merits; but these have outlived their usefulness, whereas the wild beast of Africa and Asia appears to be a being of yesterday.

"Natural history, with its scientific gravity, fails to bring these animals before us alive, it stuffs them. But in my works, they are made to play that active and intelligent part which my exact study of them has taught me to be consistent with their faculties and instincts. Those whose exclusive study has been man, will, probably, accuse me of exaggerating the intelligence of brutes when I attribute to the elephant, for instance, plans of vengeance executed in his vast brain with all the subtlety of human reason.

"In making this reproach, they prove that they have forgotten that most popular of stories, to be found in almost any book of anecdotes, and which is true, for all that it is a story.

"It is about an elephant whose driver led him to water every morning.

"In one of the streets through which the animal passed, there lived a cobbler whose delight it was to prick him with his awl as he went by; the elephant bore with this con-

temptible meanness for sometime; but, finally, goaded to desperation, he, one day, after drinking, retained a large quantity of water in his immense reservoir of a trunk, and with this, on his way home, he inundated the despicable cobbler.

"Nobody ever questioned the mark of intelligence here displayed by a tame, or degraded elephant. What, then, may we not expect in an elephant of the desert, that has lost nothing of the marvelous instinct with which it was endowed by nature!


"In this way, sir, by associating with my heroes, the larger animals of creation, just as I find them amid their own rich verdure and surrounded by the glorious horizons of their own wilderness, I feel that I am able to bring two volumes to a successful conclusion, even in winter,—and the year, alas! is but a winter in the guise of four seasons! This, sir, is the reason why I would find your counsel easy to follow."

"I find in this the greatest satisfaction, sir," replied the traveler with a smile. "I am always happy to give my friends that advice which they are themselves determined to adopt; such advice is sure to be followed."

I asked the steward for pen and paper, and wrote these pages which are to serve, one day, as an introduction to JOHN BULL, UNCLE SAM AND JOHNNY CRAPAUD, a romance which I began in the centre of Africa, department of the *Bouches-du-Rhône*, upon the shore of those waters from whose bosom rises the ancient *Chateau d'If*.

J. E.





# JOHN BULL, UNCLE SAM AND JOHNNY CRAPAUD.

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## CHAPTER FIRST

### A FIRE AT SEA.

**T**HE theatre of life's deepest tragedy is the ocean. Here the sad catastrophe has rarely another witness than the sun, the stars of the silent night, or at intervals, perhaps, a bird of passage.

At the time that the "Malabar," a steamer of the Dutch Line, was engulfed beneath the waters of the Indian ocean, no human eye was fixed upon that scene of desolation. The passengers and crew cast themselves upon the sea; the captain alone, unwilling to quit his post, was consumed by the flames. Death found him bent over the ocean chart, his finger resting upon the tenth degree of south latitude, and pointing toward the isle of Socotora.

The sea was in a very tempest of agitation, the wind blowing a furious gale; those, therefore, of the passengers and crew who, for safety's sake, had taken to the long boat

or to hurriedly improvised rafts, were almost without exception, swamped at a short distance from the burning vessel.

One raft alone held together by its superior structure, or to speak more justly, by Providence, withstood the billows until sun-set. A final and terrific gust now swept over the sea, and the atmosphere again regained its usual serenity. Like a laborer, spent with the exertions of a toilsome day, who sinks to rest within the quiet of his cottage home, the storm appeared to bury itself behind the purple clouds that girt the horizon.

Three living beings, the sole survivors of fire and shipwreck, felt a faint hope revive within them, as they watched the last rays of the setting sun lengthening out upon the bosom of a tranquil sea. Their raft, hitherto unusually favored in this disaster, could now, with the aid of timbers so adjusted as to serve the purposes of oar and rudder, be induced to observe some definite course.

Of the three passengers who had committed their safety to this frail bark, but two, following the finger of Providence, their only compass, were able to direct its motion whither this pointed; for at no point along the whole extent of the horizon was there a shadow of land visible. The third party was a young lady, prostrated apparently by suffering rather than shocked by any inordinate fright.

In the appearance of the men, there was that expression of calm energy which, in the struggle for existence, understands how to resign itself to death; they found themselves now in one of those crisis in which language gives place to action, in which there is more eloquence in the stroke of an oar than in the most elaborate discourse. For this

reason, then, it was that their desperate struggle against the violence of the sea was maintained in mournful silence. Around them lay extended the most desolate of solitudes—the broad ocean, and infinite circle radiating from their own fragile bark as a centre. The last ray of the departing sun had faded away beyond the waters; the surface of the vast liquid desert was suddenly, but for a moment only, tinged with opal; the rapid twilight of the equinoccial regions for a time permitted the wanderers to cast about them in quest of unseen shores; when night with its terrors and its snares fell down heavily upon them.

The men still kept to their oars with an address at the task which indicated that they were not unused to the water.

Every now and then their eyes wandered inquiringly towards that compass in the heavens, the Southern Cross. A ray of hope revived their failing strength, as they perceived that a favorable current was bearing them on towards the African shores, at a rate much more rapid than could be explained by the labor of their oars. The young woman, stretched upon a bed of tarred canvas, was in one of those heavy slumbers induced by fatigue, sorrow and despair.

Had some keen observer of human nature been a witness to the bearing of these two shipwrecked men at this juncture, and above all had heard the first words that escaped their lips after six hours of silence, he would have recognized in them characters of no ordinary mold and well fitted to be united in risks so full of danger.

One of the actors in this ocean scene was a young man of twenty-six, the other was young for thirty-seven. This latter interrupted their prolonged silence.

"Our task is a hard one, my dear Lorédan," said he, dropping the handle of his oar upon the edge of the raft; "I question whether life, at this price, is worth preserving."

"It is our duty to protect this young lady, Sir Edward."

"It is, and to this precisely I was adverting."

"Sir Edward, you are too large hearted to go but half-way in the accomplishment of a generous action. You have thus far preserved this charming girl from the depths of the sea; it now remains that you complete your noble work."

"The truth is, I ask nothing better: in saving her we save ourselves; there is often not a little selfishness mixed up with our good deeds. Do not, then, credit me with more virtue than I really possess."

"Speak low, lest you wake her."

"She sleeps with a confidence in us which we should not fail to justify. . . . Lorédan, you have a penetrating eye and a keen sense of smell; do you not scent Africa towards the west? Your nostrils, I notice, are questioning the nature of the breeze."

"There are. . . . there are land-odors in the air. . . . Courage, Sir Edward; the shore is not far off."

"And what shore, my young friend?"

"Of what concern is that! provided it is a shore."

"You are right; in any event, we shall rest upon our oars. The misfortune with me is that I am wholly unacquainted with this entire region; were we in the neighborhood of Bengal, an error of half a degree would scarcely escape my observation; but this quarter of the globe is to me an unexplored territory."

"Unless I am much at fault, Sir Edward, we are not *far distant from the landing of Agoa.*"

"Of Agoa! Agoa! . . . a new name to me! . . . The truth is that I am heartily ashamed of having been for the last thirty-seven years an inhabitant of so narrow a locality as the earth, and yet ignorant of the by-way of Agoa. . . You, however, are *en pays de connaissance* here, about Agoa, Lorédan?"

"I! not a blade of grass, nor a drop of water in the place is familiar to me! The name is one which I remarked upon the chart, yesterday, while I followed the finger of our unfortunate captain, and the points of the compass."

"And this, then, embraces your entire knowledge of the coast?"

Sir Edward made a brief survey of the stars, and continued at his oar. Nothing in him betrayed the slightest emotion. If to his first name we add his family name, Klerbs, we shall have mentioned one of the most intrepid navigators who, in India, have left illustrious records of their travels.

The sudden transition from night into one of those phenomenal days to be met with in the region of the equinoxes, discovered before the eyes of the shipwrecked voyagers, and at no very great distance, a faint outline of shore. They were, in fact, within the wide bay of Agoa.

Our two seafarers, on recognizing that they were within a harbor of security, did not, as is usual in like circumstances, give expression to their joy in any uncontrolled transport or exclamation. One would say that they looked upon their rescue as inevitable, or as a debt which Providence had liquidated in their favor. Men, whose souls have been powerfully tempered, preserve within their own

bosoms the secret joy or sadness which affects them, and never permit an outward manifestation of their feelings.

Under the guiding hand of an invisible Providence, the current bore their bark towards the land. As they neared the shore, a charming verdure was clearly discernible along the rising bank, greeting the wondering gaze of the voyagers, with the promise of all the treasures that lurk beneath cool shades, in sweet waters and among the luscious fruits of the tropics.

As a mother, seated upon the beach, gathers her children to her fond embrace, the bay of Agoa, as tranquil as an indian lake, appeared to open wide its circular shores to receive these shipwrecked wanderers.

The glory of the rising morning fell so softly upon the calm waters of the bay, the lofty palms bent with so much grace over either bank, and the birds in the foliage warbled so joyously, that our shipwrecked friends felt no feeling of sadness take possession of their souls when they beheld a desert land unfolding before them. It was impossible that nature, dressed in so many charms, gave them so glad a welcome only to destroy them; any dark suspicion would have been an insult to the flowery beauty of the gulf that had saved them from the waters. They, therefore, gave themselves over to every rapture of inward joy, as their bark was moved alongside a natural quay with its velvety sward and arching palm-trees.

All this while the young lady was fast asleep upon her bed of canvas. Her companions were unwilling to disturb her repose, the more certainly to allow her to enjoy to the fullest that sovereign remedy which nature has infused into the quiet of sleep, healing alike the ills of the body and

the maladies of the soul. They fastened their raft to the projecting root of an overhanging tree, within an alcove whose waving curtains of green foliage, swarming with the lively notes of birds and sparkling with the gay profusion of flowers, lent a happy charm to the spot.

The two guardians of this repose, reclining upon the margin of the bay, gazed with fixed attention upon one of the most ravishing maidens whose weary form had ever sunk to rest within a palm-wood copse, to the melody of birds and bubbling fountains. It was a picture of primitive nature, recalling a scene in the early days of man's existence, when wandering families lay scattered upon the river banks, or took up their temporary abodes within the forests, beneath the kindly rays of the sun and stars.

Nothing in the garb of these three shipwrecked creatures betrayed their connection with the inhabitants of the world of our day. The sea, like a pirate, had well nigh despoiled them completely. The dark tresses of the maiden, kneaded by the billows, unfolded beneath her head like an ebon pillow, forming a handsome back-ground for the purity of her brow and the rich carnation of her cheeks; her form was as it were enveloped in a mass of tattered sail-cloth, and her companions, whose every attention was wrapped up in her welfare, appeared to await a resurrection rather than to attend a waking.

In Sir Edward there was to be found one of those peculiar characters in whom modesty is mingled with delicacy of feeling. To some individuals, virtue as readily brings a blush as crime to those of less impressionable feelings and these dispositions are ever exerting an extreme solicitude, lest they be surprised entertaining senti-

ments of the most honorable nature. The conversation of these men indulges in a constant pleasantry which disconcerts the observer, who is hardy enough to seek to capture the treasure of kindness buried within the depths of their souls. Yet there are certain solemn moments where feeling, how constrained soever it may be, will, in its violence to expand, betray itself by a tear, a look, a gesture.

"That poor young girl!" exclaimed Sir Edward, covering his eyes with his hands; "that poor child is expected yonder, on the confines of Africa, by the family of her future husband! What a wedding tour! Were it not better that she should sleep on, as she does, for ever!"

After uttering this sentence in a low voice and in tones of deep melancholy, Sir Edward changed his mind and repented of the expression.

"I mean, my dear Lorédan," he resumed, "that, on this raft, there can be no question of reaching Capetown, where Miss Rita is expected. I have sought about me for some solid mansion of stone, or even a floating frame cabin, but I have seen nothing . . . the place is a desert . . . a charming waste, it is true, marred by the single evil of being uninhabited. . . . Lorédan, you have studied the map of these parts; did you remark, in the neighborhood of the bay of Agoa, any trace of civilized town or savage village?"

"The color about the bay of Agoa is not, upon the map, interrupted by the slightest shade of black; a uniform and hopeless white meets the eye."

"Oh! were there but you and I, this white would not disturb me! I have, in my life, met with many another! I had well nigh, with the aid of a friend, founded a city in the midst of an Indian desert peopled by tigers . . . but

here we have this poor orphan upon our hands! a lovely burden in a city, but in this desert, a heavy weight, indeed!"

"Notwithstanding, Sir Edward, it is this young girl by whom I am bound to life," replied Lorédan de Gessin, with an expression of mystery in his voice.

Sir Edward looked at him with fixed attention for a moment and, after a pause, exclaimed:

"See, now, how things clear up! . . . The fact is, I thought that I discovered a fancy on the part of my young friend for the pretty passenger aboard the 'Mala-bar' . . . . I beg your pardon for having preserved the life of Miss Rita; I have robbed you of the glory of this brave deed; but do not entertain the slightest fear that I shall put forth any claim for recompense; on the contrary, the whole of this little service I will set down to your favor: that's generous, is it not?"

Lorédan, in his turn, now steadfastly regarded Sir Edward, but with a kind expression of sadness in his looks, the silent reproach of an unhappiness which is not understood.

"To the deuce with these Frenchmen!" continued Sir Edward, "they are all alike. Upon the ocean, by the camp-fire, with the sea-sickness, they fall in love with young girls who are on the point of marrying! However, I admit that, this time, chance has wonderfully favored you, Lorédan. Her unfortunate uncle, Mr. Thomas Clinton, who was escorting her to Capetown, perished in the wreck. The young and beautiful orphan was snatched from the waves by your devotedness; there is not in the bay of Agoa as much as a brig on which to take passage to Capetown;

we are thrown upon a desert and forced, in consequence, to unite our threefold endeavor in laying the foundations of our future colony: all this goes very far to justify the delicate attachment conceived aboard the 'Malabar.' You were at fault yesterday; to-day, there is an explanation of your conduct. Never did so much happiness await one in misfortune. Miss Rita has never seen her future husband at Capetown, she will not, then, be pained to forget him."

Lorédan shook his head, still wearing his look of melancholy and maintaining that mysterious silence which provokes one to question its cause.

Sir Edward picked up a sea-biscuit, broke it, and presenting a portion of it to Lorédan:

"I understand," said he, "you regret the loss of your rich cargo of shells and moca, consumed in the burning of the 'Malabar,' and upon which you can claim no insurance. It was your entire fortune, was it not?"

Loredan answered with an affirmative gesture.

"What imprudence!" continued Sir Edward; "to risk your entire fortune in a nut shell! . . . But, Lorédan, looking upon your present condition from other points of view, you are now twenty-six years of age; why it is a fortune in itself to be but twenty-six; your commercial acquirements are considerable; you will have to surmount no very serious obstacle in regaining what you have lost. Upon my person, I have a girdle of brave old dollars which never leaves me; it is my hair-cloth; I will present you with these grains of gold dust that you may scatter them upon the first fertile soil which you shall till."

Lorédan pressed the hand of Sir Edward.

"Ah!" he said interrupting a brief pause; "ah! my

dear comrade in misfortune, you know not the depth of my misery! Did I not, indeed, hold it in the light of a sacred duty to lend you my efforts in the salvation of this girl, I would, believe me, have followed my cargo to the bottom of the sea."

"Now, in truth, I am at a loss to understand you," rejoined Sir Edward, with the air of one who sought for further explanation. "What! at twenty-six years of age, to set so great a value upon a few paltry shells or upon a few dozen grains of moca that you would perish with them! This confounds my intelligence, which is acquainted up and down through this riddle of a universe."

"Sir Edward! Sir Edward! let there be nothing in this to astonish you. Here, in two words, you have the history of my life."



## CHAPTER II

## LOREDAN DE GESSIN'S STORY.

"IN commercial circles, my father bore a name which was much respected; a name without a blot upon it; this integrity was his nobility, his pride. In 187\*, in our city, in the south of France, a severe commercial crisis occurred. On rising, one morning, my father found himself a ruined man, and ruined without resource. . . . His despair was frightful, because suffered in silence. It was not long before caught the drift of his thoughts; he was bent upon suicide. I then took the determination of never losing sight of my father, and of never, day or night, quitting his side; I even found a pretext for sleeping in his chamber and of sleeping awake, were that possible. One night, my father embraced me with a tenderness which alarmed me. I looked steadfastly into his face, the tears were standing in his eyes. I redoubled my watchfulness, with a resolution of faithfully guarding his sleeping or waking. Before morning, I saw him get up cautiously and walk over towards a piece of furniture in his room. With the aid of a light on the outside, I could distinguish two weapons

gleaming in his hands. As soon as he stepped over the threshold of his chamber, I flung myself in front of him, and forcibly pushed him back into the apartment. There, violently pressing my father to my breast, I poured forth all that the eloquence of despair could suggest to the heart of a son. What further can I add! Let it suffice for you to understand that my father, vanquished by my tears, was willing to live, or, at least, to postpone any attempts upon his existence. It was decided between us that on the following day my father should convene his heartless creditors, and, under oath, promise that within three years he would meet all their demands upon him. At the meeting which followed, this promise was made, discussed and eventually accepted. Henceforth, a terrible and arduous duty devolved upon me. My father, a sedentary old gentleman, was unequal to the task of rebuilding his shattered fortune; and the work of liquidating his debt fell to me. It was a mission of filial devotion which was confided to me, and I felt at heart the courage to accomplish it. Around me, within the ports of my native town, young men were pointed out to me, who, with no other aids than their honesty and intelligence, had amassed a rich fortune in the Indies. I set about my preparations for departure; I held long conversations with those who were conversant with Indian commerce, as well on its grander scales as in its more modest details; I embraced my father, and taking leave of him, with the promise of giving back to him the life which he had given to me, I took passage aboard the 'Indus.' Sir Edward, you know the rest. In two years, I came into the possession of a handsome fortune, and was enabled to revive the blasted existence of my father. In

a single night I lost everything. Such is my position, I leave you to form your own opinion."

In the course of this recital, the deep emotions which agitated the noble Sir Edward betrayed themselves upon a countenance bronzed beneath the rays of an Indian sun.

He still refrained from speaking, lest the tremor of his voice should declare the depth of his feeling; he, therefore, affected to be occupied with certain details of his dress, willing, apparently, that Lorédan's confidence should appear to have fallen upon his ear without sinking into his heart.

When he felt that his tone could assume the cold assurance of selfishness, he remarked, while with his fingers he combed back the dark clusters of hair that hung down over his forehead:

"Your position, my dear Lorédan, is a sad one, I must admit. At your age, a personal unhappiness I regard as a pastime; but the misfortune which has fallen to you involves another, and that other is a father; it is this that is insupportable. Yours is an instance in which despair could very well find place. However, Providence, I believe, has a recompense in reserve for the courage which, in the very frenzy of consummated ruin, is unwilling to surrender to despair. In your present misery there are, one would imagine, all those conditions which tend to justify a revolt against Heaven. There are, indeed, some fatalities which are, apparently, of so brutal an injustice, that the faith of the wisest even is unsettled. So much, then, for your present state. As for myself, when, in the course of my wanderings, I was called upon to face a great cause of despondency, I refrained from violence; I bade it live

and it did live; when, a long while afterwards, I found myself again in presence of this same grief, it was calm and joyous, as is this ocean after the tempest of yesterday. You, Lorédan, have fulfilled your duty; abide, now, the issues of to-morrow."

"But my father also is waiting; he expects, Sir Edward! he expects that which will never come; he expects life and he will meet death. My last letters from Bombay spoke to him of my approaching departure. What a blow for him! My father is triumphant with hope; a report falls upon his ear like a clap of thunder: he henceforth has no fortune, he henceforth has no son! . . . Yes, did I not see in it a sacred duty that devolved upon me at that moment, of aiding you in the rescue of this girl from the flames of the burning steamer and the billows of the ocean, I would now be a dead man. You, Sir Edward, have saved Rita, and Rita has preserved me."

"Very well, then!" said Sir Edward, with one of those sad smiles which seek to lighten a horrible situation, "well, my poor Lorédan, I take back all those wicked pleasantries which led to this explanation. I beg you will excuse me; I was deceived; but I was under the impression that you were in love with Miss Rita."

"In love with her!" repeated Lorédan, copying like a mirror the smile that accompanied the last words of his companion, "I am not in love, but I, like you and all our unfortunate fellow-travelers, recognized in our charming young fellow-passenger a marvel of creole grace and vivacity."

"Yes, she is an angelic elf."

"That is just the word! . . . I certainly agree with you

Sir Edward, that it is risky sailing with her in the Arabian gulf. Happily, her uncle, Thomas Clinton, communicated to me, in a confidential sort of a way, that at Capetown the fair child was, on her arrival, to be wedded to the man of his choice."

"Tell me, Lorédan, when was it that Thomas Clinton made you a party to his confidence?"

"The day before yesterday, Sir Edward."

"That is thirty days after we had set sail; was that not perhaps a little late? I even presume that the uncle sought to administer some charitable advice rather than to honor you with his confidence."

"You are malicious!"

"Not at all, I know what uncles are: I have had four. . . . Four inheritances which have disappeared before the devouring heat of the tropics! . . . Excuse this *aparté*. . . My dear comrade, no hypocrisy between you and me. . . In the midst of a desert and in the presence of death, with roaming lions on one side and the heaving ocean on the other, alone together, and will we seek to practice deception upon one another! Oh! in that event, humanity would be irreparably dishonored! . . . Lorédan, be sincere; you are in love with our charming creole, and in love like a novice; I am so shrewd that I make bold to boast of my cunning; here, then, no dissimulation will avail you."

"Well!" replied Lorédan, with a melancholy movement of the head, "suppose that I am in love with Miss Rita Clinton, will this not be, as far as you can see, another cause further on of more despondency?"

"How then do you look at the future, Lorédan? It

is not impossible that everything should eventually favor you—fortune and love. Stormy lives are fraught with miracles. For myself, I make little account of aught but the impossible; in it only did I ever put faith. The improbable is but a phrase among the vulgar, an exclamation in vogue among the uneducated. Providence has predestined men of our fortunes; for us only does the sun shed its genial rays. We spend our days at the antipodes of real life. Had I the misfortune of describing in an English magazine how you and I are here, occupied after fire and shipwreck, in breakfasting on a biscuit while chatting gaily in the presence of a sleeping girl, all London would give me the lie, for the simple reason that, in London, they have never done what we are doing. There is that unfortunate LE VAILLANT, a daring navigator, truly, who had the ill luck to state that, one day, he encountered an elephant front to front; that story ruined him; his voyages have been relegated to the region of African mythology. Last year I was in London, where I nearly stifled for want of room; one whose home is Asia cannot breathe in such a hovel. I was asked by a family of my acquaintance to recount a chapter of my voyages. I began somewhat after this style: One day, my good friends, I happened to be at Tranquebar; it was about two o'clock in the morning; I drank a cup of chocolate and took my departure. At these words, a smile of incredulity played upon the countenance of every one of my listeners. Not a single member of this family had ever taken chocolate at two in the morning. I stopped my recital just there. They prayed me to continue. I replied that my chapter ended there. These digressions, my dear Lorédan, which

are so usual in my conversations, always serve to lead me to my end. We are reserved for something extraordinary; we need expect but that which is not foreseen. You are a ruined man, very good; you are in love, this is passing strange. Mark, now, how Providence watches over you; follow its path and you will understand its aims. Do you believe that you have been preserved to-day for future destruction? This young girl is your visible guardian angel. Your love has spared you a crime—suicide. This coincidence of favorable circumstances is not the outcome of chance: it is the intelligent preface of a history written for you in heaven. Lorédan, you have acted with a noble filial affection, you will not fail in your reward; and I, who have never done more than commit follies, will attain to my own safety under favor of your exalted conduct.”

Lorédan gave a long and sad look at the heavens, the earth and the sea,—three mysterious, silent wastes, and refrained from expressing himself, save through the mute action of doubt and resignation.

Just at this moment, a gentle movement was perceived upon the canvas, like that of a wave passing over the form of the sleeping maiden. A small child like hand was seen to arrange a few dark curls hanging in stray clusters over the sweetest of faces. And the moment after, Rita's eyes, like two stars twinkling through a black cloud, sparkled beneath a brow of marble whiteness, while the savage nature of the wilderness appeared to take new life with the waking of the charming creole. Amid the tropical luxuriance of this solitary existence, the aspect of nature, lifeless or blooming with animation, wrapt the whole being in a vision of intoxicating beauty. Bird, tree and fountain, to-

gether with the rippling wavelets of the gulf, attended, one would say, but the mild look of this lovely maiden to give to the rich blending of their every day charm a surpassing grace and harmony.

The scene recalled the voluptuous reality of Eden. Never since the hour when man, awaking from a dream, beheld the gentle form of Eve nestled amid the scented beauty of a thousand flowers, never since the days of Eden, did a sweeter glance from woman, unadorned with the lost loveliness of paradise, light up the dull splendor of the heavens! It was a scene that recalled the hour when the unnumbered voices which, from morning till night, from dewy eve till glistening dawn, deluge the globe in song; when the psalm of the green-robed forest, the murmur of sweet waters, the echoes of the valley and the loud concert of a world of birds, mingled in one unknown melody and burst of sudden accord, proclaimed to the universe that woman was born!



## CHAPTER III

## A RIVER WITHOUT A NAME.

IT is useless to rehearse here all the expressions which the situation suggested and which, on the waking of Rita, were exchanged among these three shipwrecked passengers.

That intimacy, which so readily starts up in the midst of misfortune, was very shortly at hand to soothe the difficulties of a position which in appearance was beset with every danger. The young girl, who found in the lightness of her creole gaiety a strong support against the depressing miseries of her fortunes, was unable to moderate her first transports of joy when she felt herself revive upon the shores of a tranquil sea, beneath the cool shade of overhanging trees and surrounded by flowers. A smile even, in which she could scarcely refrain from openly indulging, lighted up her beautiful face, when Sir Edward, gallantly attired in the tattered shreds of a sail, made his excuses for thus appearing before her in his morning undress.

During the time that Sir Edward endeavored, with the

aid of a lavish expression of maxims drawn from his own consoling philosophy, to restore Rita to her habitual serenity, Lorédan made a few short and rapid incursions into the neighborhood in quest of an asylum or, at least, of some traces of humanity.

These hurried explorations did little more than point out to the wanderers their isolation, and the frightful abandonment in which they were placed. With his last journey, all hope had vanished. Sir Edward was quietly busied in arranging a head-dress of banana leaves for the young girl.

"There!" said he, "you will get nothing more elegant from any *modiste* on the *rue Vivienne* or at the Quadrant. What do you think, Lorédan, of my skill as a milliner?"

"What I do think," rejoined Lorédan, pale with evident consternation, "is that our lot has been cast in a region of horrors."

"That becomes you amazingly, Miss Rita," remarked Sir Edward, with the utmost composure; "I will make my reputation for hair-dressing here in Africa. Your luxuriant black hair blends gracefully with this bright green. CORREGIO has dressed one of his nymphs very much in this style. It is a work preserved in the Pitti gallery . . . . You would then, Lorédan, give it as your opinion that this is a? . . ."

"Region of horrors, Sir Edward."

"Ah! beware of entering any calumnious charges against creation. For my part, there are but two localities to which I would apply the epithet horrible—*La Cité*, in Paris, and 'The City,' in London. But the surroundings in which we are here placed are magnificent, my dear ship-

wrecked friend. Have you ever seen more beautiful trees, softer verdure or lovelier waters?"

"With not a trace even of human footsteps."

"All the better, Lorédan. Are you not aware that in this place a thing more than all others calculated to terrify, would be human footprints? You have read 'Robinson Crusoe:' he discovered human footprints upon the sands of his lonely island, and well nigh perished of his fright."

"Well, be that as it may, Sir Edward, I hope we are not going to consume the time in making banana hats and sandals of nenufar."

"Give yourself no concern on that score, Lorédan; our toilet is made; and as we have partaken of our frugal breakfast, we will be off forthwith in search hereabouts of some traces of man. I am not, you will see, unskilled in looking up such matters. It is very much like looking for an unknown house in endless Oxford street; there are certain methods to be observed in the exploration. Here you have a charming stream, a fertile territory, a lovely site. Excellent! this place is inhabited; it remains only to ascertain the whereabouts, street and number of the settlers. I will, furthermore, tell you that they are a well-disposed and hospitable people; for the landscape is a delightful one, this hill is gently rounded off, the river runs with a clear stream and the atmosphere is balmy. Again, the insects, a rare fortune in Africa, are not of that blood-thirsty kind which in a short while so irritate beings of the mildest dispositions, that these, too, in turn, thirst for blood.... You see, Lorédan, I have not been idle in gathering the most intimate secrets of my native earth. A very near future will bear me out in my convictions. You shall be my witness, my friend."

"Very good, Sir Edward, I put every confidence in your experience; but if we shall persist in delaying to compose idyls on the sea-beach, when we should set ourselves to look for a shelter, we are not likely ever to fall in with this hospitable and well-disposed colony where we are to expect a welcome and a safety. I confess, that at every breath of wind that stirs among the trees, it appears to me that our little group is about to be enlarged by the advent of some ravaging lion."

"There now is an error and one gathered from the tales of navigators who never made a voyage. You imagine, then, that lions loiter dreamily along the ocean beach after the fashion of the 'Lakistes' poets. I know too much of lions for that; they dread the sea as much as they do fire. The ocean is a monster which holds them at a distance, and whose roar would drown a whole African concert. However, Lorédan, I am of your opinion that it is high time we sought a shelter, and set about pursuing the indications of Providence in our regard. There is the music of a human voice in the murmur of this pretty river; it beckons us as it were under the direction of Providence; it invites us to ascend its banks, promising, where we rest, to slake our burning thirst; arise and we will pursue whither it bids us follow."

At some distance from the sea, the river was veiled beneath a long flowing arch of tamarinds, which waved in a double line above its waters.

Along the borders of the stream, like a green scarf, meandered a natural footpath edged with iris, upon which the naked feet of the travelers found no little relief; the wild trees which stilled their hunger or moistened their thirst,

reached through the thick curtain of tamarinds, like helping hands, strewing their fruit upon the grass or upon the waters.

The wanderers held hopefully on their course along this marvelous highway.

"It argues the patience and riches of God," remarked Sir Edward, "to preserve this lavish abundance of living waters, various fruits and choice flowers, which for the last six thousand years have been nourished for the solace and refreshment of three shipwrecked creatures."

The young lady, absorbed as she was in her very recent grief, moved forward with silent resignation, expressing by glances only, full of indescribable sweetness, the gratitude which she felt towards her kind preservers.

She readily understood the ingenious delicacy underlying Sir Edward's air of carelessness, when he affected to act and converse as if they were in the very heart of civilization, enjoying a pleasant stroll up and down the walks of an English garden; and she, herself feigned, accordingly, to be fully strengthened against any thought of danger, that she might make Sir Edward the only recompense which he there valued—the satisfaction of thinking that she was deceived into his false security.

There are in woman's heart a thousand subtle shades of feeling, and in a silent contest of delicacy between them and ourselves, man is invariably vanquished.

After five hours of uninterrupted travel and exploration, this journey along the river bank had led to no discovery. Lorédan was manifesting impatience; Rita leaned heavily upon the arm of Sir Edward, and was no longer able to advance without the greatest effort.

The sun, which at intervals revealed himself through the glades of the green canopy, descended from his high in the zenith, like the time-keeper of the desert, to announce the hour of mid-day. The trees, one after the other, in their endless succession wished, it appeared, to conduct our travelers to the confines of the African continent, to the source of a river which bore no name. The stillness of nature was frightful. The noonday silence reigned everywhere. Nothing was heard but the gentle ripple of the stream caressing the polished pebble along its bank, or the rapid flight of some unseen bird.

At times a shrill note from some tufted warbler, a prelude to his aerial song, issuing from a throat of rubies and gold, broke in upon the silence of the solitude, awakening echoes which the voice of man had never disturbed.

For a long time the virginal charm of the landscape had screened the terror dwelling within the depths of the dark waters and the unpeopled forests; but the native grace of river, tree and flower, disporting together beneath the eye of God alone, was before long dispelled to disclose, under a hypocritical exterior, nothing but desolation and death.

Lorédan, too young and too impulsive to conceal, even in the presence of a woman, a thought which excited his alarm, stopped short, stamped the ground with his foot, and, seizing his hair with a gesture of despair:

"Sir Edward," he cried with a husky voice, "to go farther is useless, this path leads nowhere."

Sir Edward let the arm of his young companion fall gently from his own, and fixed his look steadily upon Lorédan:

"My young friend," said he with his customary immobility, "there is no path which does not lead somewhere; we must, however, follow it, if we are willing to reach that terminus. Take my word for it; I am thoroughly conversant with the mechanism of an eccentric life: we have never been rescued from fire and shipwreck to perish along this irrigating aqueduct. Providence, the author of the improbable, walks by our side; let us perform our duty, he will not fail to fulfil his in our regard."

"Ah! Sir Edward!" cried Lorédan, crossing his hands above his forehead, "you know that it is not for myself that I ask life! my courage has vanished; redouble yours to supply mine."

"You are a child," rejoined Sir Edward with a smile which balanced the rebuke. "Ah! my God! when one has taken leave of the street of his birth and removed from the number of his former residence, the unforeseen only he must expect will attend him! They whose path lies in front of the Regent Circus or on the *boulevard Montmartre*, are little exposed to find a bed in the desert. If I may be allowed a word about myself, I have for my own guidance drawn an admirable and quite natural line of conduct. Every evening, when about to fall asleep, I feign that my course is run and that I breathe my last in my own arms. In the morning, I revive with a daily new surprise, which never fails to lend to my waking moments a fullness of joy. Where we seek to inure ourselves to a life of travel up and down the broad universe, we must, when this city hankering besets us, have recourse to a maxim of a like significance with this. The routine of real life would be death. Their spleen murdered my four

uncles in their tracks; it devolves upon me to protect the life of one of their nephews. I made it my purpose to rid myself of this family epidemic, and I flatter myself upon my success. The globe is my mansion, the forest my garden and the broad expanse of the ocean the lake, in whose waters I am so variously delighted. I never, then, have any occasion to leave my possessions, and my life is passed in visiting my broad domain. Had my uncles been blessed with my tastes, they would now enjoy life and fortune. They, however, had the folly of being wise men and directors of silk manufactories in Manchester. My uncle Edmund was sixty when a friend informed him, in confidence, that the sun and stars were in the firmament. This knowledge finished the poor man; ten days later he died of chagrin. The county of Lancaster looked upon my uncle as the most gifted of mortals. Tell me now, who was the bigger fool, he or I? Lorédan, you will please excuse the want of logic in my remarks; in the garb of a wrecked voyager, one finds little time to attend to dialectics. My endeavor has been to rehearse in a word or two, and by fits and starts, a whole volume of philosophy; neglecting form, then meditate deeply upon the substance. Lorédan, keep your courage! and be convinced that, on high, more interest is awakened by us three unfortunates wandering in the depths of this solitude, than is excited by entire populations plodding through the mud of our large cities. Lead on, then; with a wild fruit in one hand and a few drops of water in the other, let us follow whithersoever the sun leads!"

And graciously offering his arm to the young lady, Sir Edward pursued his adventurous march westward.

Lorédan bowed his head and resumed his steps after them.

The young French voyager was gifted with that ordinary courage which dares to brave those perils of which one is fully aware, and upon which one happens in the ordinary category of dangers: it would have been his delight to face without flinching the hissing bullet or to carry a redoubt. To brave death at the price of blood, to meet it amid the swell of music and the roar of cannon is easy, and all the world can do it; but there are unknown dangers whose indefiniteness and uncertainty set the heart athrobbing, paralyze the very roots of the hair, disturb the utterance. Against these we must be fired with a courage unknown to the most intrepid warrior.

This last virtue was wanting to Lorédan; it was rather with the thoughts and feet of Sir Edward, than with his own, that he moved forward to discovery. A mysterious terror, as violent as a fever and as overwrought as a frenzy, drew every object before his eyes under a horrible shape and filled his head with a confused and frightful uproar, resembling the onset of an army or the tramp of wild beasts over the desert. The wild excitement of his thoughts was further increased by the bursting forth, at intervals, of two feelings whose imperious nature set his reason at naught,—the thought of his father and his love for the beautiful passenger of the "Malabar." During this breathless march across unknown tracts, his mind reverted to the soft and balmy nights he spent upon the Arabian gulf, when the deck was ablaze with the sparkle of the maiden's eyes, and the mariners, their hands upon the cordage, ceased for a time to ply the ropes that they *might watch her child-like frolic.*

There are certain attachments which, from their very birth, take on a character which is thenceforth ineffaceable; such loves are the product of sunny climes; they are rocked in the barks of their native sea, the wild waves chant their nuptial vows, and the stars of the southern night listen to their first promises to register them on high in letters of gold. In his heart Lorédan had conceived one of these absorbing passions; and during a few short days at sea had lived an age of love.

Nothing henceforth would avail to efface the memory of those ecstasies with which a thousand times his soul was filled, when, leaning against the balcony of the "Malabar," he blended the fair form of the woman he loved with the sublime pictures of Indian nature, framing their combined glory with the immensity of ocean and sky. His ardor, therefore, failed to animate him with the courage which was to bear him up in his present position. In his own eyes, he was able to explain to himself and to nobly excuse his trepidation under his present personal danger; for his father's existence and the well-being of this woman were thereby imperiled, and make what efforts his skill and heroism would suggest, he was still unable to avert or escape the frightful issue.

Unpreoccupied with these terrifying thoughts, inured to the stormy struggles of a sea-voyage, holding life at no more than it is worth, isolated upon earth and coming down but at long intervals, from his lofty egotism only to render some brilliant service and vanish before the recompense which sought to reward him, Sir Edward walked on in his adventurous course with all the airiness of a stroller in Hyde Park, or the careless serenity of a botanist engaged in collecting flowers.

This unconcern, part real and part borrowed, at every step served to build up the wasting energies of his fair companion, and caused Lorédan himself to doubt at times the danger of the perils by which they were surrounded. It is as when, at sea, novices upon a stormy ocean, trembling before the winds and waves which they imagine about to engulf them, are reassured of their perfect immunity from every danger by the joyful tranquillity of the captain, whose perfect acquaintance with tempests, does not deign to hold this one worthy of his dread. Burning or dragging marches, fiery anguish, hopes kindled and extinguished, silent and mournful halts, had exhausted the remaining energies of our three wanderers; nothing now was left of that treasure of courage, strength and resignation, with which nature endows souls who have determined to gird themselves for suffering.

A doubt now flashed across the countenance of Sir Edward, as he cast a rapid glance to his left. Through an opening in the foliage, a desolate and uninhabitable plain met his eye; here and there skirting lakes of sand were clusters of tall, slender pines; heaps of gray rocks resembling the ruins of some African Palmyra; trees of a dismal growth, scattered at intervals over this barren waste like cypresses weeping over the sepulchres of giants; a horizon, resting upon high and naked mountains, whose peaks, cut sheer down like obelisks, appeared to lure to their cliffs and their dens the eagle and the lion: it was the interior of primitive Africa with its secrets, its mysteries, its snares and its horrors.

The cloud of distrust which, for a moment, darkened the countenance of Sir Edward did not escape the scrutiny

of his companions, whose living compass he was. The young girl threw herself down amid the tall grass by the river side, sadly shaking her head in token of despair. She extended her hand to Sir Edward and to Lorédan to thank her kind preservers in this last extremity for their attendance, upon her lonely bed of agony and death. Sir Edward taxed his ingenuity for some expression of cheering consolation, and was much at a loss to find himself indulging thoughts of sadness. His young comrade flung himself down beside Rita, while his attitude of hopeless despondency declared his intention of linking his fortune with hers and of sharing this last struggle of the agonizing wanderer. The cool hours of the receding sun light induced a freshness which, beneath this green vault, was unfavorable to the explorers. The pale tints of the twilight, precursor of the night, rested upon the shady avenues of the forest and had already darkened the transparent waters of the little river. From beneath the underwood and the dense foliage of the interminable forest, might be heard the song of birds and the chirp of insects greeting the setting sun. Man, who, like some profane spectator, assisted at these mysteries of untamed nature, understood that he was here, within a domain over which he exercised no control, and that, at the first twinkling of the stars which in these tropical latitudes quickly reach their culminating brilliancy, monsters, monarchs of this solitude, would take up their hurried march to this river which God, at the dawn of creation, commanded to flow for ever and be a watering place for the countless beings of this African wilderness.

Our three wanderers had now arrived at that stage at

which fate or fortune must intervene. It was the moment which Providence seemed to have awaited for the interference of that salutary wonder which the incredulous call chance: the hour, too, when they who have failed to merit assistance are overwhelmed in despair.

Sir Edward, whose attention was diverted to everything, stood with his eyes fixed upon the root of some trees whose foliage was made brilliant by the level beams of the horizontal sun, watching, with quiet sadness, the last glimmer of sunlight going out upon the desert.

Suddenly he trembled from head to foot, and, turning around quickly, observed the same symptoms of terror depicted upon the faces of his companions. The young girl was on her knees, one hand firmly pressed upon the ground, her large dark eyes wide open and staring, her ear inclined towards the river, as if catching a sound whose distinctness she could not but believe she had certainly marked. Lorédan, by an expressive gesture, questioned Sir Edward; with one hand he grasped the hand of Rita, while with the other, convulsively stiffened, like the rigid index of a dial, he pointed towards the source of the river.

The senses of all three had in nowise deceived them.

The vault dense with thick verdure and acting like a conducting tube filled with dull echoes, reverberated a second time with a hoarse and powerfully timbered cry, which seemed to leap from a breast of brass and to rebound, with a grating and corrosive vigor, upon the human flesh. There was no doubting it; it was the imperial voice of the lion.

It is beyond expression to picture the icy stupor which *comes over* the lone sojourner in the wilderness, when the

deep, sharp and formidable note of the monster king of Africa, calling forth his last *adieux* to the setting sun, breaks upon his ear. The noble image of the lion appears to start up everywhere: the branches of the trees bristle like manes; the roots lengthen out like extended claws; every reflection of the falling twilight on leaf or twig is the eye of a beast upon his path; a single roar of the lion is sufficient to people the desert and to paralyse the courage of the bravest heart.

Once the danger had, so to say, taken shape, Lorédan felt his first courage revive; the thought of a vague, intangible evil tormented his highly nervous organization; but now that this evil had a form and a name, our young voyager briskly summoned up all his manly daring and addressing Sir Edward:

"We must save this woman, we must save this woman!"

"That is precisely of what I am thinking," said Sir Edward with thoughtful composure.

"Sir Edward, the lion is in our neighborhood. . . . His cry is still ringing in my ears. . . ."

"Not at all, Lorédan, he is yet at quite a distance. I am keen scented and no novice to this situation. . . . However, it is not a single lion that causes me apprehension; there may be a herd of these monsters. . . . But, Lorédan, there is no room for further hesitation, this unfortunate young girl must be borne to yonder thickly wooded islet. We will, probably, be waist deep, crossing the river. . . . There at least she will find a quiet and secure shelter for the night."

"And what of to-morrow, Sir Edward?"

"To-morrow belongs to God."

In the feeble condition to which she was now reduced, Rita was unable to execute any will but that of her companions in misfortune. Actuated, therefore, by the single feeling of passive courage under the sufferings to which she was subjected, she wholly abandoned herself to the enlightened care of her fellow victims, and, with a motion of her head, signified her consent to every resolution taken by them in their common interest.

The small island which, during a night of menacing darkness, was to serve them for retreat and the comforts of an inn, possessed every desirable advantage. The branchy fulness of the trees, woven one into the other by parasitical plants and tendrils, afforded a secure shelter against prowling beasts. Besides, it was not to be apprehended that the monsters of the desert would cross the bend in the river which Providence, to hold them aloof and keep them upon either bank of the stream, had caused to wind around the island. After depositing their gentle burden upon a grassy couch, within a natural alcove of ebony trees and naucleas, Sir Edward and Lorédan experienced in their hearts an interior joy, as comforting as a risen hope. In the depths of complete misfortune, it is a little thing that cheers the sinking heart: in the fulness of happiness, a smaller thing that saddens. This ray of joy which with the last beam of the sun lighted up the faces of the two friends was, unknown to them, the gleam of a presentiment.

The eye of Sir Edward, which, lest some ambushed foe should thence surprise him, never ceased to reconnoitre every tuft of grass along the river-bank, suddenly shot forward one of its fiery glances, and his hand quick to fol-

low the direction of his eye drew from the drift of leaves and floating roots, a long piece of timber, shaped like a baluster, and struggling among the eddies to push forward on its journey to the sea.

Lorédan would have uttered a cry of joy, but Sir Edward closed his mouth, and whispered in his ear:

"Go and quietly prepare the young girl for the news of our rescue; caution is necessary; she is so feeble . . . Lorédan, look at this piece of wood . . . it is nothing, a trifle in any other place; here, it is the salvation of three human beings. . . . Unless there is an orang-outang cabinet-maker in these forests, who has carried imitation to perfection, this fragment of carving has become detached from some enclosure in the neighborhood. Mark well that I say *in the neighborhood*! and the reason is, that this piece of skilfully wrought timber has been but partially moistened by the waters of the stream; the dry side is still warm from the heat of the sun to which, before becoming detached, it had been exposed; and the fact that it is not yet cool, is proof that the enclosure of which it formed a portion is not far distant. You must, Lorédan, from various sources, be acquainted with the fact that a number of Europeans have established themselves in the interior of Africa, among the *kraals* of savages and the dens of lions. . . . In less than an hour, believe me, we shall meet people; and, as a matter of course, friends. This last discovery I will enter upon alone. I am conversant with forest life, have a quick eye, sure scent and a lively step. You, remain here with her, to guard her repose; leave me to myself: when alone, I fear nothing . . . Lorédan, do not oppose me, I will answer for my success. I have met with many such mishaps a

the sun of India can attest! Good bye, Lorédan, it will be an absence of a few hours. And in the end, if I find nothing, I will return to die with you. Silence! and take care you give this charming child no unnecessary fright. Remember too, that in the event of our meeting with hospitality in this wilderness, you are to pass for her brother. It is well understood then, that you will be brother and sister; this is very important."

Lorédan bowed his head in token of assent, and said: "It is not for my own, but for her sake that I pray God to be your protector."

The roar of the lion was heard for the third time, and at the same instant the sun went down, twilight faded and the darkness of the night set in.

Lorédan made an effort to detain his friend; but the bold traveler persisted in his resolution. From the palm of his hand he took several draughts of water, and, leaning towards his companion, he whispered in his ear:

"Lorédan, you know we find everything in the Bible, even these consoling words:

"And he shall drink of the torrent in his way: therefore shall he lift up his head . . . . And he shall trample under foot the lion . . . ."

"This, the prophet David foretold concerning me."

Then, waving a last farewell to his friend, he plunged into the stream.



## CHAPTER IV

## THE JONATHAN FAMILY.

THROUGH the darkness of the night and the shade of the surrounding forest, the little river constantly emitted a phosphorescent brightness which served to guide Sir Edward on his way.

His step betrayed no sign of the day's fatigue. The course of the active explorer appeared to be directed towards some certain goal, for his marvelous instinct, thoroughly trained by a life of wonderful discoveries, had long since convinced him that this extensive border forest was fast losing its character of a solitary wilderness, and that, at no great distance from where he was, human hearts were beating by the banks of the pretty river.

It would then presume a familiarity with those mortal thrills which at times seize upon man, to feel the shock which was felt by Sir Edward, when, in the silence of the night and the gloom of the desert, the words of that old and popular ballad fell upon his strained attention:

"A Captain Smith of Halifax  
Who dwelt in country quarters. . . ."

At the same instant, behind the dark drapery of the trees, he caught the reflection of a light from windows in the neighborhood, together with the profile of a long, low building delineated upon a dark ground, in a starry setting. Crossing the narrow stream, he hastened in the direction of this providential shelter; but an impassable ditch, at the bottom of which was heard the dull murmur of flowing water, abruptly hindered his approach.

In the hope of finding a bridge or passage over it, he followed the course of the water; the abyss, whose sides were cut perpendicularly, encircled the building without, apparently, any outlet. Security at night explained the conduct of the proprietor in this precaution: this protection set at naught every attack from the outside, whether of man or beast, and were he not mindful of the frightful anxiety to which this would subject a friend and the woman committed to his charge, the traveler would willingly have waited until sunrise to seek hospitality, such was his respect and admiration for this line of defense.

This thought added strength to the little voice remaining within a breast hollowed by prolonged abstinence, and, with that false intonation which is inseparable from an English throat, he launched forth into the ballad "Captain Smith of Halifax."

Immediately upon the outburst of this unlooked for and shrill clamor starting from the depths of the darkness without, the whole house was roused as it were from slumber; all the lower casements were thrown open, the shutters of the kiosks grated harshly upon their hinges, and a number of negroes, carrying torches of yellow wax in one hand and a rifle in the other, appeared upon an outer

balcony. The gallery, thus suddenly illuminated, was crossed, at a quick and resolute pace, by a young man who advanced as far as the edge of the moat, to a spot where he could distinguish Sir Edward still hard at his ballad.

The figure that met their strained eyes was a weird and wild one. There was something so dismal in the color and arrangement of Sir Edward's costume, that the sight of him drew forth a cry of terror from the negroes: but their master made them a sign; and, forthwith, notwithstanding their superstitious dread, they lowered the drawbridge across the moat. In three bounds Sir Edward cleared the bridge, which was immediately swung back to its fastenings. All this was accomplished in the twinkling of an eye.

The scene of hospitality which followed, was natural and primitive in its simplicity.

"I am Willy Jonathan, nephew of Eleazar Jonathan, an American, and the gentleman of this house," said the young man, shaking the hand of Sir Edward.

"Our fathers were fellow-citizens," answered the traveler; "I am Sir Edward Klerbs, a subject of Great Britain."

"Well, then, in your distress we again become brothers," said young Willy. "I am twenty-five years of age, and this is the first opportunity with which God has favored me of seeing and extending hospitality to a European."

"It is not in my own welfare that I knocked at your gate," replied Sir Edward: "I would not have disturbed the patriarchal quiet of your evening repast on my own account. But yonder, about two miles from here, on one of the river-islets, there are two unfortunate creatures, a young man and his sister, a feeble girl; both, like myself, victims of *shipwreck*—for these, I claim your assistance."

"Are they there, at this hour?" asked Willy; "yonder, upon the Green Isle? Come, then; there is not a moment to be lost! Here Donki, Neptunio, Nizam! Unchain Elphy, my best dog. Get a flask of constance and another of wampee juice. Sir Edward, come in and stay with my uncle and sister; I will take it on myself to bring you your companions."

While Willy presented Sir Edward to Eleazar Jonathan, the negroes were busily engaged in executing the orders of their young master. Nizam, his confidential servant, a soldier of that terrible war the name of which he bore, a man used to conflict with Taugs, whose ferocity and cunning surpassed that of tigers—Nizam examined the priming of the rifles, lowered the drawbridge, stationed two sentinels upon the edge of the moat, unchained Elphy and caressed the dog with so mysterious an air, that he appeared to take him into his confidence. The noble brute slowly approached the moat, catching the feline scent as it was carried upon the night breeze from the hostile quarter, and assuming at the same time the anxious look of an intelligent being who has just been invested with some grave responsibility.

As soon as Willy made his appearance, the dog, with the agility of a panther, was the first to leap upon the bridge; at a sign from Nizam, the negroes followed in the tracks of Elphy. Willy, his rifle in hand, closed the ranks.

The hall into which Sir Edward had been ushered was of vast proportions, airy and alive with flowers, perfumes, birds and fountains. Eleazar Jonathan and his niece Elmina, seated upon a divan covered with mats, accorded the traveler a most welcome reception.

Jonathan was a man of a fresh and vigorous old age, with here and there a few fine silver threads upon his brow, and an open honest expression in his countenance. His niece was a charming girl of sixteen, with the fair face of an angel, made human by eyes of a lively blue, from which at times she darted a glance full of wild expression. She was, indeed, a beauty such as solitude conjures in our dreams, impressed with the primitive charms of early creation.

Her dress, cut from Bengalese cloth and fashioned after patterns from "Saris," by no means aped the lying fashions of Europe. It fell in unwrought folds about the wild loveliness of her graceful form.

This charming child of the wilderness, who never felt the tyranny of fashion, had developed all the natural charms of woman: every motion was an agreeable undulation, in which the stately movement of the swan was combined with the graceful attitude of the gazelle. She seemed the personification of virgin Africa, or the mysterious divinity of those wilds so full of the exciting allurements which promise life, and of the poisons which hasten death.

To approach this young girl with his tranquillity of speech and quiet wit, argued a philosopher with the energy of Sir Edward Klerbs. In a few moments, he had given a gallant tour to his dark curls and arranged the massy thickness of his beard, which was luxuriant with the powerful growth of the tropics. Seated at this providential festal board, prepared for himself alone, he quickly resumed his normal character. From the ease of his movements, the charm of his manners and the careless

gaiety of his conversation, he might have been taken for a nabob surrounded by his slaves, and affording himself hospitality within his own royal mansion.

"Thus then, Captain Jonathan," remarked Sir Edward after some previous conversation of little moment, "thus then, this Africa of yours has witnessed a very touching scene this evening—John Bull and the Yankee cordially shaking hands."

"Sir Edward," replied Jonathan with that noble smile to which white hairs lend so many charms, "Sir Edward, national enmities hold themselves aloof in the desert. Society fosters hate, man in the wilderness knows none."

"Society is absurd, Captain Jonathan."

"Perhaps you are right, Sir Edward. In any case you are a witness here of the manner of life I lead. And mark well that my establishment in interior Africa is not an exception. From Capetown to my place, there are over five hundred families living in this tranquil isolation and enjoying this broad liberty. At the time I was in command of the 'Belveder,' then trafficking among the Indian ports, I sailed on one voyage as far as the bay of Agoa, and, while hunting with a number of officers, I ascended this little river, to which we gave the name of the Limpid Stream. After some hours' travel, we reached this spot: we were unwilling to venture farther, as our hunt would have taken a more serious character, and since our number was too small to enable us to engage in a successful chase, we returned. Many years later, when I had conceived a dislike for men and cities, the recollection of this expedition determined the place of my emigration. I came here with my brother, my family and a few devoted

servants, fixing my abode upon this spot. Thirty years have since passed. During that space of time, I have experienced no other misfortunes than those which are inevitable, or which nature, wherever his lot is cast, forces every man to undergo: I have opened and closed three graves. Sir Edward, these few words will suffice for to-day to explain to you my position. You will, day by day, gather further knowledge of it and will understand that I am happy."

"God be blessed!" cried Sir Edward; "I have, at length, found one! I have seen the Duke of Northumberland in his place at Charing-Cross angle; I have seen the Duke of Devonshire in his fabulous castle; I have met Palmer in his Batavian seraglio; and Sir William Bentinck, next to the sun, the monarch of India; I have seen myself everywhere; and of all these incarnate Perus, I have asked whether they were happy; I put myself the same question; we all made the same reply; we gave no answer at all. Our silence was answer sufficient. God be blessed! Between Agoa and Adel, in a land which on the world's map is one unbroken white, in a land which does not exist, I have met a man who is happy!"

"But, Sir Edward," interrupted Jonathan with a smile of patriarchal goodness, "we are all happy here, and it is in your own power to enjoy that same happiness, by making your stay with us until such time as you shall find an opportunity of taking your departure."

"That is a thing one should not refuse, Captain Jonathan. But just two words, if you please: what manner of life do you lead in this wilderness?"

"We are engaged in commerce, Sir Edward."

"In commerce?" cried Sir Edward, "in commerce? and with whom, pray?"

"We are engaged in a commerce of exchange. . . ."

"With the lions and tigers, Captain Jonathan?"

"With men, Sir Edward. Our products enjoy an excellent reputation in Asia. We furnish ebony, wax, dragon's blood and ivory; in payment, we receive what commodities are required for our consumption; money we refuse, which here would be of little profit. Owing to the fact that we are too many, this trade does not suffice to insure us a fortune, but we enjoy thereby an easy maintenance far above our wants."

"This, Captain Jonathan, is a comfort to me. Excuse the ungovernable eagerness of my curiosity. At what place do you make your exchanges?"

"Nothing more simple, Sir Edward. Twice a year, at fixed seasons, the negroes in our employ go down to the bay of Agoa. Two merchants, the one a Chinese from Canton and the other a Japanese, anchor in our neighborhood, and with these we operate our exchanges. Our wax is in very great demand with them, and is, in fact, a very excellent article. We gather it here in the neighborhood, at Honing Clip. These merchants reap very large profits from their trade, and, to exclude all competition, they maintain the utmost secrecy as to its origin; so far do they carry their precaution that, when they take to their ships, they cause every vestige of their camp upon the coast of Agoa to disappear. This exclusiveness and prudence are to our interest also, Sir Edward; for our quiet solitude is by this laid less open to the invasion of *avaricious competitors* and greedy adventurers. When one has

sought flight from society, the condition is that society will refrain from following in pursuit. It is, however, unnecessary to state that this applies in no sense to the unfortunate victims of shipwreck, whom the hand of Providence has conducted into our midst through the darkness of the night."

Sir Edward, who had already conceived a vast plan of amassing in this commerce of exchange an immense fortune for Lorédan, saw the whole structure crumble at the last words of the old man. For a few moments he maintained a silence which, if prolonged, would have appeared strange; he therefore quickly relieved the conversation with a return to his usual serenity.

"Captain Jonathan," said he, raising a cup of constance to his lips, and bowing gently to Elmina; "Captain Jonathan, situated as I am, in an unknown country, I am veritably become a living point of interrogation, forever hanging upon the lips of an answer: tell me, I beg you, on what terms are you with your neighbors?"

"We have no neighbors, Sir Edward."

"Well! that is singularly surprising to me! I am forced then to tell you that, to-day, towards nightfall, I heard in your vicinity a formidably bass voice, which of necessity did not issue from a human throat."

At these words, a burst of laughter, as heavenly and melodious as the song of Bengalese birds, pealed along the maple-ribbed ceiling, waking in their silver trellised aviaries the birds that had gone to rest with their beaks nestled in their gay plumage. The bengalis, the cardinals, the loris and the paroquets stretched forth their necks that they might ascertain, through the folds of the blinds,

whether dawn, at the rousing of this harmonious cry, yet glistened on the palm tops. The aras on their roost, swinging heavily to and fro, cast side glances towards that end of the hall in which Elmina stood laughing.

"I never heard my niece laugh so heartily before," said Jonathan, taking the small hand of the young girl in his own. "You shall shortly understand, Sir Edward, the motive of this wanton gaiety."

"Oh! uncle," exclaimed his niece with a bewitching hilarity, "don't explain anything; I want Sir Edward to pardon my rudeness, and afterwards to thank me for my explanation."

Mingling a tone of harshness with the deeper sounds of her rich voice, Elmina called aloud: "Come, come, Duke!" snapping the ends of her small ivory fingers. Duke entered without awaiting a second call.

He was a superb lion, with an almost human face, on which was stamped the royal majesty of the desert, but a lion of that harmless type which, in the language of heraldry, are *mornés et diffamés*. Slowly approaching Elmina, and placing his enormous head upon the lap of the young girl, he brushed his flowing mane against the loose folds of her dress.

There is an admirable *tableau* by the illustrious painter CAMILLE ROQUEPLAN, representing a scene like this. The artist thought his picture was ideal; he was drawing to life.

Sir Edward, like FABRICIUS before the elephant of PYRRHUS, maintained a steady composure; nor did his voice even betray the least emotion, while, crossing his *arms upon his breast*, he exclaimed:

"Blast it! it is this gentleman then, with the head-gear of a London attorney, it is this rascal which caused us such a fright. . . . Does he present his paw, Miss Elmina?"

"Just like a dog; look, Sir Edward."

"And do Elphy and he agree, Miss Elmina?"

"As tried friends, Sir Edward; they have even exchanged natures. It is Elphy that is the lion, and Duke that is the dog."

"Now!" said Jonathan, "if you start Elmina upon the subject of lions, you will have stories until daybreak."

"Oh! a lion is so amusing!" said Elmina; "I take advantage of Elphy's absence to caress Duke; Elphy is as jealous as a tiger. The other day, he bit Duke's ear, because Neptunio, at meat time, helped the lion first."

"But it appears to me, Captain Jonathan," said Sir Edward, "that this Duke here would, by his roaring, gather about you some of his terrible fellows, who would hardly allow themselves to be bitten by a dog."

"That is a big mistake, Sir Edward. I perceive that your study of the lion has been confined to SAAVERS' natural history. It is an admitted fact that learned naturalists make their observations from sketches only. It is not so, Sir Edward?"

"To whom do you put that question? I have, myself, been a *savant* for ten years."

"Sir Edward, Duke does us, on the contrary, very substantial service; he keeps the lions at a distance; in proof of this I will cite but one fact. . . ."

"Uncle," broke in Elmina with all the pertness of a child, "let me tell that little story to Sir Edward. . . . You allow me, do you not? . . . Well! . . . Listen, Sir Edward:

We have a servant, or, better, a child of the house, a brave soldier of the Nizam war, whom we call Nizam, because he is always talking about that war. Nizam is so clever and vigilant, that he not unfrequently is bold enough to make short excursions, as far, yonder, as the lion's cascade, into a valley into which the very bravest of our domestics dreads to enter. My father alone dared to go two miles farther than the limits at which Nizam stopped: but my father, as Uncle Eleazar can tell you, had no equal as an explorer. Well, one day, Nizam was returning from one of these perilous expeditions to Elephant Lake, when he perceived two lions pursuing the same path with himself, and moving in the direction of our house. In the twinkling of an eye, he climbed into a palm-tree and concealed himself among its foliage. At the same moment, Duke roared out his salute to the setting sun. The two lions suddenly stopped short; the thick hide of their muzzles shrank back from the jaw to the forehead; they opened their enormous mouths, gnashed their teeth, twisted their tails and clawed the roots of the tree, but not a single roar in answer to Duke. Brave Nizam watched them closely from his high observatory and missed nothing of their pantomime. . . ."

"I would like to have seen M. DE BUFFON there with all his laces," remarked Sir Edward.

"Just then," continued Elmira, "Duke roared a second and a third time. And then, oh! those two lions did have such nervous attacks, Nizam says, that they stared with their eyes wide open; they bit the grass with furious contortions of their mouths; afterwards, as if they were

ashamed of having lowered their majesty by these unworthy signs of uneasiness, they threw themselves down upon all fours, and fell to licking their right paws and then to combing their bushy manes and silvery beards with a lofty indifference, not a little like gentlemen who had upset their toilets in an undue fit of emotion. To rid himself of these troublesome sentinels, Nizam, all this while in his seat in the palm-tree, was planning some ingenious scheme; and Nizam has so many cunning resources at hand! The lions, however, did not await the development of his scheme; they arose and slowly removed to a distance from the path leading to our house. Do you understand the conduct of these lions, Sir Edward?"

Sir Edward stroked his forehead with his hand, looked up to the ceiling, swallowed a glass of constance, and replied:

"I do not understand their conduct. I know what SAAVERS and BUFFON say about the lion. The lion, they tell me, is a quadruped which is with justice styled the king of animals: he is bold, brave, generous, has forty teeth, a magnificent mane and fears the crow of the cock and the hiss of the serpent. Do you think, Miss Elmina, that with these acquirements . . ."

"Sir Edward," said Elmina, again laughing heartily, "if that is the cleverness of your naturalists, you did not, surely, interpret the conduct of the lions as Nizam did. Here, then, is the explanation. To your ears and to ours Duke has the genuine roar of the lion, of the free lion, and of the lion in his strength; but to the ears of his fellows of the wilderness, the thing is quite otherwise;

their sense of hearing is much more acute than ours. Those two lions perceived, with the wonderful sagacity of the brute, that this distant cry came from a degraded, captive and unfortunate lion, the victim of some horrible snare set for those of his kind by some superior animal. Hence, at his plaintive cry, they became enraged to their utmost against this invisible enemy who lords it over the lion; but as this enemy did not put in an appearance, they kept on their course, abandoning, for prudence' sake, the road to this powerful foe."

"Their reasoning was very correct, Miss Elmina. . . . And we are pleased to style this kind of beings animals! There is a good deal of pride in naturalists! Your Duke, then, Captain Jonathan, is a priceless guardian. I am of opinion that, this trait in the lion's character once discovered, Duke would prove a very efficient escort in the wilderness, employing him by way of a hunting dog. Would it not, perhaps, be possible to put him to this use? Miss Elmina, I am very thankful to you for this little anecdote: it was very diverting, indeed. In Europe, the order of the evening is a tedious gossip about our neighbors: I perceive that the same custom obtains here; but your comments are chapters of unwritten history, and your neighbors, lions: I much prefer this African gossip."

The barking of Elphy interrupted them. Sir Edward rose hurriedly.

"There they are," said Captain Jonathan.

Miss Elmina, with a motion of her hand, dismissed Duke.

"My niece," continued the old gentleman, "call your attendants and conduct this young lady to your own

apartments. She will occupy your chamber. I will not give you your lesson in chess, this evening."

Bidding her good night, Jonathan tenderly embraced Elmina. A voice full of evident emotion answered him:

"Uncle, your slightest wish shall be fulfilled. I regret only your lesson in chess."

Elmina left the hall; Sir Edward continued with Captain Jonathan.

A loud tumult was heard of steps and voices upon the terrace. The voice of Nizam could be distinguished issuing his last orders at the entry. Shortly Willy entered, accompanied by Lorédan de Gessin. The young Frenchman cast himself into the arms of the old man and kissed him.

"My young friend," said Jonathan to Lorédan, "you need repose; we will make a fuller acquaintance to-morrow. Good night! I leave you with your friend. My niece will attend to your sister. Sleep is a remedy for all the ills of youth. Do not be at any uneasiness; you are in a safe place; you are within the protecting asylum of the 'Virginia;' this is the name which, in memory of my native land, I have given to these premises."

Jonathan bade the young folks good night; and, followed by Nizam and Neptunio, went up stairs to his own apartment.

Elphy paced slowly up and down in the vestibule, with all the importance of one who had rendered a great service and who was grieved that no return was made.

"Gentlemen," said Willy, "your rooms are prepared and waiting for you."

"Willy," said Lorédan, "that is the only invitation

which I am now in a condition to accept. To-night my strength will not allow me to make you that return of thanks which your merits highly deserve. I will postpone my acknowledgments until to-morrow."

Willy followed his uncle, after directing two of the domestics to wait upon the orders of the two friends.

Sir Edward was unwilling, before separating from Lorédan, to dismiss until morning his eulogium upon Elmina.

"My friend," he said, addressing him in a low voice, "you are under the impression that there is but one angelic elf under this roof. There are two. To-morrow you will be introduced to Miss Elmina, who has actually confounded an old man of thirty-seven like myself! She is a lion tamer and a girl with eyes as glorious as a sunbeam; she talks with all the animation of a woman who never before met with an audience in this wilderness, and who opens out her store of words to the first person she meets. What a good fortune will the advent of three shipwrecked guests prove to the solitary girl! We must look up a means of making ourselves indispensable in this place. I shall, I warrant, discover a way. Our future is a horizon of azure and gold; go, sleep soundly, and let this be the color of your dreams; we will transform them into realities.



## CHAPTER V

## THE RESIDENCE, ITS COLONIES AND DEPENDENCIES.

FROM the very earliest period, the table land upon which the "Virginia" was situated enjoyed all the advantages of a natural peninsula. From the most primitive times, the waters of the Limpid Stream and of another torrent had worn a deep and wide bed on three sides of the island; the hand of man, to complete the work of nature, had opened up a fourth water course, thus forming a perfectly fortified inclosure, under the government of Jonathan.

The breadth of these moats, even at their narrowest points, was sufficient to defy the efforts of the most agile beasts in the neighborhood. Often, at night, the gazelle, with that instinct of the more timid animals which leads them in danger, to seek a refuge with man, would, when pursued by the panther, hurl itself across from the outer bank; and in the morning, victim and destroyer would be found rolling at the bottom of a precipice, which neither was able to clear. The fallow deer, so quick, either by natural inheritance or family instinct, to detect a hostile

snare, had for years respected the approaches of the "Virginia," thinking, no doubt, that this domain, sprung from the bosom of the desert, was a most terrible monster ever ready, with its four gaping mouths, to engulf them.

A negro domestic maintained a strict watch along the inner bank of this moat, and it was but at rare intervals that the click of his rifle told of the approach, from some remote district, of an unsuspecting foe, to whom the dangers of the "Virginia" were yet a mystery. Animals like the elephant and the lion, whose sense of perfection was keener, felt, from the start, that over this island they exercised no lordship.

In the recollection of old Jonathan there were seen, at one time, forms of monsters moving about between the trunks of the trees, and firebrands gleaming in the copse wood; these apparitions, however, had not, of late, reappeared.

Savages and the more powerful among the prowling quadrupeds sent to reconnoitre the position of the "Virginia," recounted in their caverns in the mountains the experiences they had met and showed to their kindred the bloody wounds which had been inflicted by an unseen and unapproachable foe.

Without any apprehensions from the brute creation—at least within the precincts bounded by these four ditches—the "Virginia" had the further good fortune of finding in the Makidas negroes, a tribe of trusty auxiliaries. It is a well known fact that, from the interior of Zanzibar to the frontiers of that mysterious wilderness which rolls on towards the Equator, Africa is peopled by a race of savages whose nature is, as a rule, of a very mild disposition

The Makidas, better perhaps than any others, illustrate this observation.

The charm and beauty of their lands, the freshness of the sweet waters by which these are irrigated, and more, probably, than anything else, the imperious necessity in which they are placed of living on terms of good fellowship with their neighbors, and of ranging themselves under the same standard against the formidable foes whose domain they have usurped, have contributed to humanize the Makidas and to despoil them, little by little of the native ferocity of the desert tribes.

The Makidas, pursued, by their intractable neighbors, from one mountain fastness to another, and from one valley to another, had, many centuries back, pitched their *kraal* upon a delightful island cropping up out of the bosom of a deep lake; and here, after the manner of ancient people, they followed a quiet life of hunting and fishing.

The alliance which was cemented between them and the brothers Jonathan, and the good neighborship which sprung from it, dates back to an origin which is not unworthy of record.

A Makidas hunter trapped an elephant; and, to relieve him of his supply of ivory, crushed his head with a fragment of rock. This elephant, it appears, enjoyed a wide reputation in his herd, for the reason that he was either its leader or its scout. This, likely enough, subjected Isle Makidas to one of the most formidable invasions ever known.

The following day, not under cover of the darkness, but in open sunlight, issuing from the forests of Sitsikamma,

their ancient stronghold, a numerous troop of elephants was seen directing their march upon Lake Makidas. It was as if an avalanche of grey boulders was rolling down upon the plain, and uttering a roar so loud, that each boulder seemed a volcano in a state of eruption.

The Makidas were convinced that, this time, the instinct of their enormous enemies had risen up to the very character of thought itself. Secure, for the moment, in the situation of their camp and the breadth of the lake, they soon learned not to doubt the imminence and the enormity of the danger. Arriving at the lake side, the foremost elephants plunged into the water with the intrepidity of old swimmers. The entire troop followed the action of their leaders. All of them, after their habit, submerged their ponderous forms in the lake, and, in an invisible body, their trunks raised above the surface of the water, they moved towards the island. It was like one island bristling with reeds floating towards another overgrown with trees. Not daring to trust that their arrows or the spells of their charmers would avail to repulse this powerful aggression, the Makidas, with their wives and children, took to the water on that side which lay opposite to the point of attack; and during the time that the brutes were ravaging the *kraal*, uprooting trees and overturning cabins, with a fury resembling, in every particular, the unbridled rage of human vengeance, the nimble savages gained the opposite shore, and retreating from one shelter to another, drew up before the Jonathan premises.

Among their domestics, the masters of the "Virginia" employed a number of Makidas negroes, who were the most manageable and devoted of their servants.

At the first cry of distress, these hastened to ask protection for their brethren from Captain Jonathan. The little tribe had flung its weapons into the encircling moat, and the women, with their infants raised above their heads, implored help in the name of innocence in the cradle, which is common to every land, to every shade of complexion, and to every form of religion.

Jonathan took the savages under his shelter; and, to teach the elephants a very severe lesson, if they dared to trespass upon his frontiers, he put his servants under arms. There was, however, no call for these precautions. It was afterwards ascertained, through the information of a few Makidas, who, to witness the destruction of the *kraal*, had perched themselves upon inaccessible rocks, that the elephants had, through a dark valley, taken the road back to the forest of Sitsikamma, like conquerors who had wreaked their vengeance in the sack of a city. Another incident, speaking very favorably for the high sense of honor by which these savages are actuated, had perhaps determined the sudden retreat of their sagacious enemies.

The hunter, who, for a speculation in ivory, had destroyed the elephant, generously considering himself the author of this disastrous invasion, awaited, with unflinching courage, the approach of the revengers, brandishing, for his defense, the very tusks of his victim. As this heroic savage, the CURTIUS of his tribe, never afterwards made his appearance among his people, there is good reason to presume that the elephants, with their natural good sense, accepted the sacrifice of the only culprit and regarded his death as a satisfactory expiation.

The Makidas, as soon as they manifested a desire to re-

turn to their island in the lake, were loaded, by the Jonathan brothers, with invaluable presents, which guaranteed their entire security in the future. The chiefs of the tribe brought back with them twelve rifles, carrying charges for elephants, and a complete orchestra of brass instruments, an artillery of sound, more formidable in a war with wild beasts, than the unerring ball discharged with the aim of a Makida.

It cannot, then, be matter for surprise that later these negroes should perform prodigies of devotion in the service of their benefactors, the Jonathans. Gratitude is a black virtue, as much as ingratitude is a white vice.

When Eleazar Jonathan was desirous of surrounding himself with all the ease and luxury which his means might command, he called to his assistance the most skillful workmen on the lake; and, himself directing all their labors, he shortly had at his pleasure a mansion of which a nabob might be proud.

Twelve kiosks with projecting balconies, their blinds of naucleas guantlets, intermingled with the golden buttons of the acacia, decorated the *facade*: the roof, edged with a cornice of maple and notched awnings curving after the style of the Chinese, was surmounted by a lookout of various hues, from which the surrounding view embraced one of the most marvelous horizons in this unexplored land.

Young Elmina loved to pass her evenings here in sweet reverie.

As long as the African sun, with a dazzling veil, woven of a tissue of fiery atoms, enveloped everything, surrounding nature,—water, forest and mountain, fell in one blurred

*grandeur* upon the sight; it was the chaos of Eden wrapped in the luminous fog that preceded the creation. But with the decline of the glorious orb behind the western horizon, this veil and these foggy rays appeared to follow in his train; the landscape revealed itself in all its freshness and in all the virginal beauty of the early days of the world. Colors of the liveliest hue, shades of the most delicate tint were seen detaching themselves upon this immense *tableau* with a distinctness which was truly admirable. Through the mild glory of the twilight, the hills appeared to scale the mountain sides, and the mountains, to push upward to the skies in the clearly mapped outlines, with gently waving slopes or rugged steepes. At this hour of holy contemplation, the beautiful Elmina felt a pulse of pride in her heart at the thought that, for her admiration alone, the hand of God had displayed this spectacle of beauty, and that but a single young maiden was invited to witness these gala-hours of sun, river, mountain, forest and ocean.

This was Elmina's evening prayer. After the innocent joys and pleasures of the day, she loved for recollection to retire to this aerial oratory. Alone, in the midst of a limitless creation, where everything acted in perfect harmony and love, she sought in vain for some sister soul, and drew back in surprise when the powerful and fertile nature about her, which responded to the whispers of the torrent flower and harkened to the sighs of the mountain pine, was silent and sterile at the cry of a lonely maiden.

Willy Jonathan, the brother of Elmina, had attained to that age in which thought is lost in absorbing passion: but the spirited and busy character of the life which he

lead at the "Virginia" had stirred up so confused a tumult within his whole being, that this attention was not distracted by the inner and stormy voice of the senses.

On foot before the rising sun, he inaugurated the domestic labors of the day; led the servants to Honing-Clip, where innumerable swarms of bees were hard at work; to the forest, to fell trees; to the pasture, to tend the flocks; to the shrubbery, to the garden, to care for the plants, fruits and flowers.

For every one, his look and word of encouragement were an incitement; they redoubled the energy of the toiler, and lightened the burden of his labor. It was the glory and the ambition of Willy to outdo the most hardy and nimble of his savage retainers in courage and agility. To clear, at a leap, the foaming and thundering cataract; to rise, at a bound, from the root to the branches of the palm-tree; to snatch, at a favorable moment, from the neighboring cliffs, a brood of eaglets or a litter of lion whelps; to drive a fatal ball into the ear of an elephant, all this was but pastime for young Jonathan. His eye was as unerringly sure as that of the beast of the forest or the hunter of primitive times; while his whole body, built, it would appear, for suppleness and elasticity, was gifted, besides, with a strength of lungs which lent suddenness to his spring and rapidity to his flight.

These physical accomplishments, which are held in so high esteem by savages, made the young settler the idol of his own domestics and of the negroes of the neighboring tribes. Willy was the divinity of the clan Makidas; whenever, at the return of the new moon, he sojourned for a while upon their island, the entire *kraal* resounded with

joyful acclamations; whole families cast themselves at his feet; mothers presented their children, that he might fondle the little things; and the old men of the village, lifting their eyes to the sun, to make him their witness, declared that they never saw anything to outdo this young white king, who united in himself the grace of the panther with the majesty of the lion.

This devotedness was in the soul of young Jonathan the well-spring of an abundant happiness; he was convinced that their attachment was genuine; for no interested flattery had, so far, found its way to the cabins of the Makidas.

His visit ended, Willy disposed of a number of presents among his black friends, after which the entire tribe escorted him to the water's edge to watch the graceful movements of the swimmer, as the waves parted before the stroke of his skillful arm; a moment later, he shook his dark ringlets on the opposite shore, and was up and outstripping the bird or winged arrow in its course.

Nizam, next to the masters of the "Virginia," was the foremost man in this African settlement. To guess at the age of this Anglo-Indian domestic of the Jonathans, was no easy task. With him it was as with not a few men; after thirty, they never grow older. He mentioned Ceylon as his birth-place, but never would state positively that he was a native of that island.

A soldier of Colonel Feneran's regiment at Coromandel, it was his good fortune to rescue from death the Colonel's eldest son; and when requested by Mrs. Feneran to state whatever recompense he might desire:

"Give me," he replied, "the liberty of the sea."

The colonel paid his passage aboard the "Delhy," which was sailing from Ceylon to Moka. To renew her supply of water the "Delhy" anchored off the bay of Agoa. Nizam, captivated by the seductions of an adventurous life, abandoned the voyage at this watering place, and, together with a deserter, ascended the course of the Limpid Stream until he reached the Jonathan estate.

So lively was the impression made upon this man by the terrible scenes of the Nizam war, that every other description of life was, to him, monotonous and insupportable. Had his desires been consulted, he would, doubtless, have awaited the issue of the expedition; but his regiment was ordered to Coromandel to repair the immense losses sustained in the most sanguinary conflict upon which the rays of an Indian sun have ever fallen.

Nizam yearned for an existence amid the stirring scenes of a life which had been too suddenly interrupted. Savages and wild beasts would, for him, enact the part of the formidable Taugs. He was never at rest save in extremities from which there was no probable issue; in mysterious conflicts, engaged with intractable foes.

"I have lived for two years," he would say, "upon the nests of sea-birds, seasoned with Manilla spice; and now it is impossible for me to live upon a China dish of ashbuds, or nenufar root!"

Our petty struggles of civilized warfare, lazily drawn out in the swamps and fogs of the north, fail to give us an idea of this vast Indian tragedy, known, or, better unknown under the name of the Nizam war.

Ignorant Europeans that we are, with our proud knowledge of history resting upon four tedious volumes which

have appeared again and again for the last five hundred years! we know nothing yet of the preface even, of that indefinite history in which nothing is wanting, whether a nebulous antiquity, heroic exploits, rivers of blood or sublime iliads; we know nothing of that desperate conflict, whose theater was the vast territory that reaches from the battle fields of the Punjaub to the cape Coromandel, from Golconda to the shores of the Yellow sea and the gulf of Siam.

The Nizam war was the last episode recorded in that unknown volume, written in streams of human blood, beneath the brilliant rays of a glorious sun, along banks of aloes, within the groves of the palm-tree, or on sands of pearl and shores of coral.

At Hyder-Abad, the capital of Nizam, there was an "Old Man of the Mountain" called "Hyder-Allah"—the Lion of God. At his cincture he wore the magic axe of the goddess "Deera," upon whose altars none but human victims were ever offered. This Indian had formed the design of freeing his country from the English rule, through the agency of a dark confederacy which, from one initiated conspirator to another, he set in active operation throughout the entire province of Nizam. This was the association of the "Taughs." The English regiments, stationed throughout the country, were not slow to understand the invisible power of Hyder-Allah.

The nocturnal visits of these stealthy foes carried off their sentinels; officers, whose spirit of adventure allured them to a distance from their camps, never returned. And, despite the minutest search in forest, thicket or river-bed, into the bowels even of the earth, into ravines, caverns,

precipices, and the most complete ransacking of village huts, no trace of a corpse was ever discovered. The English garrisons, man after man, were being fast annihilated; and yet no trace of murder, no hostile foot-print, no report of fire-arms, no cry of victim ever shed a ray of light upon these dark assassinations.

The Taugs, as naked and supple as the boa, daubed their skins with the color of the soil upon which they crept; and like cunning beasts, they let no advantage of ground or verdure escape which would enable them to approach their enemy unseen. They pounced upon their victim with the impetuosity of tigers, and strangled him on the spot; then, as chance disclosed later, they bore the body to some neighboring brook; afterwards, that nothing might, the next day, reveal the secret of the murder, they turned the waters of the stream into the trench within which the dead man lay buried.

Staggered, at first, by the silent and invisible terror which overpowered them in these nocturnal encounters, the English soldiers became eventually inured to a species of warfare, in which the savage cunning was met with civilized craft, where every combination which European tactics or strategy could suggest, failed against the clever plans of their unapproachable foe.

One night, Major Walencey, in command of a detachment posted apart in a vast grove of tulip trees, twelve miles from Golconda, clothed a number of saplings, hidden in a dense thicket of dark verdure, with the scarlet uniform of the English soldiers. He put himself at the head of a troop of fifty picked men, perfectly naked and cleverly disguised as yellow tulip trees abloom with flowers. The

Mosy, a river of Nizam, flowed hard by, with a loud torrent that drowned the breathing of the soldiers, which, in the silence of the night, the subtile ear of the Taugs would have distinguished at a thousand paces. So solemn was the hour, that the ambushed Europeans, when the stars stood out in the sky, were heedless of the inner life of an Indian wilderness here laid bare before them. To take but one instance, a tiger which appeared upon the opposite bank to slake his thirst and whet his claws, came and went, without exciting a look of terror or curiosity.

The soldiers stood as motionless as the shrub whose flowery vesture they had borrowed. After waiting long, and when on the point of losing hope, Major Walencey remarked a light waving in the tall grass bordering the river bank, and at the same instant, on the edge of the copse and in the neighborhood of the scarlet uniforms, he perceived a group of bald and copper-colored specters rising up, as from the depths of a sepulchre. The guards flung aside their woody disguise, and, with a strength that baffled all resistance, fell upon and seized the entire band of crafty brigands. In the hope, however, of some important revelations, they refrained from killing them on the spot. But, bound by sacred oaths, to an inviolable secresy, the desperate Taugs maintained a dead silence; not a complaint even was wrung from them by the torture; they died like martyrs.

Such, however, was the temper of the enemy, that this discovery had little effect in quelling the now universal uprising. The English found themselves in the midst of a formidable insurrection, in the midst of a rebellion which was calm and invisible, rife in every quarter and present

nowhere. Day by day, the English saw passing to and fro, in their midst, threshers of rice, Jemidars, Fakirs with their *poitah*, gardeners with their implements of husbandry; and every man of these Indians, who, beneath the sunlight, wore the garb of peace and industry, clothed himself, with the advent of night, in the malice of the assassin. So harmless did they appear and inoffensive, that there was no hope of bringing the insurgents to a pitched battle, and of striking a decisive blow. The only alternative for the English was resignation to the situation; and the prosecution against the Taughs of a dull and inglorious war of extinction, which, during the day, had all the semblance of a profound peace, but, during the darkness following, took on all the features of an infernal devastation. The English, with that unconquerable tenacity which is the true secret of their power, entered upon the situation as it presented itself. They lost, it is true, some of their best soldiers and bravest captains in the conflict, but, in the end, when years of blood had flown away, they accomplished the extermination of the Taughs, and brought peace to the Dominion of Nizam.\*

Such was the character of the little colony, at the time that the three new guests were welcomed with that hospitable solicitude with which the lone dweller in the wilderness always receives his wandering fellow-man. At the gates of Paris or London, three unfortunate victims of shipwreck, without food or raiment, would long remain naked and famishing for some one to relieve their distress; but

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\*Mr. Taylor, a distinguished officer, who gave proof of remarkable courage in this cruel war of Nizam, published in *London* a very able and curious work upon the "Taughs."

the lowliest cabin in the wilds of Africa, America or Asia is ever open to receive the unfortunate stranger.

This dwelling, hitherto so quiet, will of necessity become the scene of more bustle and agitation, on the arrival of three new and unknown personages.

It is impossible to persevere long alone in solitude; man seeks man. Society takes its rise in the lonely cabin only to perfect itself in the populous city. Notwithstanding the repulsive attraction of his meal of sweet water and roots, it was the first solitary in the "Thebaid" who peopled the desert wastes of the Nile.

SIMON STYLITES was alone upon his column, simply because there was no room for two; had he chosen a pilaster instead, he would have had a companion.

The first Englishman who took up his quarters in the basement of the Hymalaya believed himself an anchorite; the lapse of a few short years saw the six stories of this Babel of God peopled by a world of tenants. The law of nature requires this. The most hidden recesses of the earth are only waiting to be peopled. Solitude may be a happiness; and there is, perhaps, some mysterious law gathering men together, to prevent their attaining to this earthly enjoyment.



## CHAPTER VI

## THE INDIAN BALLAD.

**A**MONG the many settlements founded by Europeans within the wilds of interior Africa, none enjoyed equal advantages or contended against equal inconveniences with the "Virginia." The Dutch, English and Portuguese colonies, established in the country of Natal, within the fertile valley of Boror, at the foot of Mount Lupata, or occupying the region lying towards the bay of Zanzibar, and along the bank of the Quilimanei, possessed good neighborhoods and a ready recourse to immediate protection. These were all rustic mansions, at a very considerable distance from the European settlements, it is true, or from the *kraals* or friendly villages, but all enjoying an equal security with any large country *château*, along the banks of the Loire, or in the extensive meadow lands of Oxford county.

True to the family traditions of the American pioneer, the brothers Jonathan were desirous of raising the *standard of civilization* within the limits of that belt of terri-

tory hitherto judged uninhabitable, and upon a soil which owned no lord but the lion or the elephant.

A livelier interest, for this reason, attaches to this adventurous family, than is felt in the colonies peopling the banks of the Orange, or gathered at Mozambique or Zanzibar. This interest will increase even from the moment that the passions, manners and language of the civilized world menace the maidenly seclusions of the rising colony and sound the approach of storms which the burning sun of this hot climate will cause to burst forth with more violence in the heart of man, than upon the summits of the African mountains.

But a few days sufficed to bring about a sweet intimacy between the masters of the "Virginia" and the late arrivals. Seclusion and misfortune are unacquainted with the gradual and awkward approaches, indicated by moral precautions, to the state of unsuspecting intimacy. Scarcely had Sir Edward, Lorédan de Gessin and the youthful Rita set foot upon the threshold of the "Virginia," than they were treated as old friends. Eleazar Jonathan, enlightened by the wisdom of white hairs, saw no danger to his house in the temporary hospitality afforded to the three shipwrecked wanderers, who would, doubtless, embrace the first favorable opportunity of returning home.

The monsoons were at hand ; and the visitor expected to put in at the landing of Agoa for the usual barter, would take the guests aboard. They would buy their passage with a large sum, promising never to reveal the shores along which the merchant effected his mysterious exchanges. This was the plan and this the hope of Eleazar Jonathan ; and in the contingencies of a very near future, *it must be admitted*, all this was very plausible.

But while old age, too far removed from the days of its youth to preserve the recollection of them, is occupied with plans which reason suggests and which are of infallible success, youth, the mistress of the present and the future, is dreaming things of fancy, and often lives to see them realized. Old men are masters of the past only; they are even blind to the glow of the first sweet word, that opens up, at their very side, a history, the issue of which they shall never live to witness.

One day, a few moments before sunset, the terrace in front of the "Virginia" was the scene of a very original *tableau*, and one not frequently exhibited in our galleries of art. Upon a slope of the deep sward, still warm with the heat of the setting sun and strewn with dry pine knots interspersed with blossoms of the acacia, the inmates of the "Virginia" were reclined, willingly disposed, apparently, to prolong until star-light, as was their custom for a few days back, a conversation in which the full charm of interest was heightened by an absence of all restraint.

As may well be presumed, the conversation did not turn upon those questions which agitate the European world, and which the journalism of the day opens up to the discussion of every town and village throughout the land.

Had Lorédan or Sir Edward fallen to discourse upon questions dividing the House of Commons, or *la Chambre des Députés*, the sun would have perhaps suffered an eclipse, without the intervention of the moon; the little river hard by would have flowed backward to its source, and the countenances of the listeners would have taken an *expression* unknown to LAVATER. As far, therefore, as the

subject and form of these conversations in the wilderness deserve a remark, it is not to be expected that in them we will detect any likeness to the chatty intercourse of our *salons*, or the malicious gossips of the day. Every society, in a manner growing out of its positions, thinks for itself and has its peculiar mode of expression. Concessions are necessary to the caprices of our variously peopled planet, which God, surely, has not limited to the department of the *Seine*, or to the county of Middlesex.

"Miss Rita," said Sir Edward, "Miss Elmina has fitted you with a charming costume. At Bengalore, I saw a brahmaness dressed in that same material and in a fashion very much after yours. Those large bright flowers are set off beautifully by that background of *feuille morte*, and contrast exquisitely with your pretty handkerchief of China crape, as light as the wings of the humming bird. The brahmaness of Bengalore, like you, wore just above her elbows a pair of elegant coral bracelets matching wonderfully with the soft copper tint in which the rounded loveliness of her arms was clothed; but their burnished beauty little compared with the ivory whiteness of yours. Your hair, too, is of the same deep ebony and wavy black, and the magnolia which you have set in the left braid gives it an admirable effect."

"I accept your compliment," said young Rita, "and refer it to Miss Elmina."

"Sir Edward," said Lorédan, "you comment upon the toilet of others with a very evident spirit of foppery. You have not yourself been congratulated upon that mandarin dalmatic in which you strut about with all the pompousness of a young Kolao of Zhé-Hol."

"I accept your compliment," replied Sir Edward, "and refer it to Captain Jonathan, who has dressed him so well whom the sea had undressed far better."

"When you go a hunting, Sir Edward," remarked Willy Jonathan, "I advise you to leave at home your canary tunic, with its four-phased portraits of the moon, else the first black monkey you fall in with will pick a quarrel with you."

"Indeed!" replied Sir Edward, "black monkeys, then, don't fancy this costume! And how, pray, must one attire himself to meet the approval of these gentlemen?"

"As Lorédan and myself, sir. In a light white, the planters' style."

"Nizam, my old Nizam," broke in Elmina, "since Sir Edward is so fond of brahmanesses, sing your Indian ballad for him . . . you know the one I mean . . . The ballad of the Cascades of Ellora."

Just then Nizam came upon the terrace; he saluted Eleazar Jonathan and his company, placed his rifle against the trunk of an acacia, and, with a melancholy shake of the head, replied:

"Miss Elmina, my voice is well nigh gone; I had rather fetch two ivory tusks from the forest, than two couplets from my throat. However, I must obey you."

"Oh! it is so long since I listened to your song of the brahmaness, my dear old Nizam," said Elmina. "I am sure these gentlemen would be delighted to hear it; especially M. Lorédan de Gessin, for he sings the Malay *pantouns* exquisitely."

Lorédan bowed.

"Miss Elmina," inquired Nizam, "will I accompany my-

self upon the *bin*? You know Duke becomes angry whenever you grind an Indian instrument about his ears."

"And Duke is right," said Sir Edward. "It appears that lions are much like myself in the matter of nerves; they have very delicate ones when there is a question of Indian music."

"To such an extent, Sir Edward," said Nizam, "that I have a mind to set a violoncello upon casters and rasp all night long in the neighborhood of the Lion's Cascade, to give that vast menagerie down yonder a fit of neuralgia."

"Duke does not like the *bin*, it is true, Nizam," said Elmina. And taking the lion's white beard in her hand, she said to him: "Duke, they are going to sing now; behave, and be quiet."

The superb brute opened his big eyes of glassy gold, and closed them again, passing his large forehead beneath the hand of his mistress; then stretching out his paws with a sudden movement of gratification, he fell over upon his right side, in the motionless attitude of the heraldic lion *in pale on a field sinople*.

Nizam was preluding upon his instrument in those simple and plaintive accords, so much like the low soft chant of the mariner at evening on the moonlit moles of Naples or Genoa: for beside the lukewarm sea, beneath a star-roofed sky and along the grassy river bank of every favored land, the music of all melodious tongues, when left to the expression of its own sweet nature, knows but one note on which to sing the things of love.

Suddenly, without the passing glimmer of the twilight, the day went out in darkness. From the depths of the neighboring torrents, rose up the low harmony of the Cas-

cares; from the hill-tops the perfume of the yellow broom was wafted down into the surrounding vales; from the far off and untraveled lakes of the interior, a sweet freshness came over the waving forest; the air was filled with soft and mysterious raptures, the legacy of a Southern sun to the lovely night of the tropics.

Nizam sang the following stanzas :

THE MAIDEN OF GOLCONDA.

Beneath the blue lake's tepid strand,  
Beneath the cascades of Ellora,  
There passed me on the yellow sand  
A beauty fair as young Aurora.  
Thy charms, I said, as she passed me by,  
Thy coral and pearl are fairest of all;  
For thee Aureng-Zebe heaves a sigh,  
In his ancient palace of Bengal.

Oh! who will give me, once again,  
By the lake to roam,  
Of my boyhood's home,  
To listen now, as I did then,  
To the charming voice  
Of my young heart's choice,  
Beneath the cascades of Ellora?

I'd say to her: That star, at night,  
In the blue god's brow, with splendor gleaming,  
Ne'er shed a lustre half so bright,  
As the glory from thy dark eye beaming.

Oh! sing to me the touching plaint  
Which Delhy's queen oft made of thee;  
I love it when, with accents faint,  
You sing it in sweet Bengalee.

Oh! who will give me, once again,  
By the lake to roam, etc.

No second maid won a brighter name  
'Mong all Golconda's noble beauties,  
With whom, at sweet sixteen, she came  
To render Siva festal duties;  
Of twenty rivals proud and fair,  
The sultan of Five-Rivers gave  
My lovely queen of graces rare  
A present to his vizier brave.

Oh! who will give me, once again,  
By the lake to roam, etc.

At midnight, when fierce tigers roam,  
I waited once in vain to meet her;  
A bonze youth, 'neath the pagod's dome,  
Revealed in heaven a form far sweeter  
Than the one I wooed by the lake's strand.  
She waits for me in Paradise;  
In Mandana's rich garden lands,  
The jealous Blue God's loveliest prize.

Oh! who will give me, once again,  
By the lake to roam, etc.

A long silence followed the ballad of the Indian soldier.  
A number of Bengalese negroes, old servants of the  
house, who were seated at some distance from their mast-

ers, buried their faces in their hands and wept, as they caught the sweet sounds of their own melodious tongue. A group of Makidas, reclining with their wives and children in the shade of the vineyard near by, were still leaning forward to catch the last notes of the Bengalese song. The acacias, their topmost branches stirred by the gentle breath of the night wind, showered down their ripening blossoms upon these upturned faces of bronze, ebony and traceless ivory, whose expression was illumined by the same starry brightness and animated by the same secret emotions.

At that moment something unusual transpired which, except by the quick and practised eye of Sir Edward, passed unnoticed.

Willy Jonathan got up quickly and walked towards the eastern moat, here and there gathering a wild flower which he found blooming in the high grass. Elmina left her place, and approaching Rita, embraced her with all the tenderness of a sister.

Then, as if regretting this friendly demonstration, for which nothing in the dreamy and silent scene about them appeared to suggest a motive, she walked over to Nizam, and said to him, in a voice which betrayed some emotion :

"I thank you, my dear old Nizam; you never sang so well."

"Miss Elmina does not flatter you, Nizam;" said Sir Edward, with an attempt at gaiety, which was affected for the purpose of interrupting the trying ordeal of the scene. "Where did you learn that song, Nizam?"

"A Taug prisoner used to sing it for me every evening at Golconda."

"I wish you would sing it often for me," said Rita. "I want to learn it too."

"I remember it from the very first hearing," said Lorédan; "I will sing it for you to-morrow, my dear sister."

Rita said nothing. She got up to return Elmina's embrace. The two young girls, the bare arm of the one encircling the slender waist of the other, left the circle, and walked towards the eastern moat; both were silent, as two young women are when about to take each other into confidence, the one hoping that the other will speak first. Lorédan cast a side glance upon Rita and Elmina, unable to account for the mysterious emotion which came over him at the moment.

Sir Edward, to divert attention from these strange little incidents which an Indian ballad had occasioned, abruptly asked Nizam :

"You are just from the chase, and with empty pouch. Was it ill luck or want of skill?"

"Well! I went no farther north than twelve miles, to-day, Sir Edward; this is the reason why I killed nothing. . . . The wind is blowing from the inland lakes, and all fur bearing animals and the birds face the wind in search of their prey, which they scent in the breeze. Hence I saw nothing."

"You had no luck, then?"

"Yes, Sir Edward; I did have luck. I brought home something more valuable than game or a pair of tusks; but just as I was about to present it to Miss Elmina, she ordered me to sing. I obeyed. After my song I thought that everybody had fallen asleep; for not a single person spoke. At length I thought I had a fair opportunity of

making my offering to Miss Elmina; but she withdrew with Miss Rita, and I must wait. . . . I am inclined to think, Sir Edward, that something unusual has transpired at the Virginia. . . . Something; but what it is, I am at a loss to make out. . . ."

"And what started this strange notion, Nizam?" asked Sir Edward, with a smile; "do you suppose that every two weeks will witness a shipwreck off the bay of Agoa?"

"Sir Edward," replied Nizam, "we are Englishmen, you and I; suffer a fellow countryman, then, to state to you a few observations which he has made. . . . I am prepared to show you that a change has come over the Virginia. For one whose closest attention has always been fixed upon the study of the greater animals of creation, it becomes an easy matter, when he carries his observations up to man, to put a very correct interpretation upon his movements. I reason this way: When I notice that an elephant wanders from his customary line of march, when he fails to utter his habitual cries, or to frequent his usual pasture grounds, I understand that the beast finds himself in a difficulty of which his instinct had not previously acquainted him. Whenever, during the Nizam war, on a calm day, I perceived an undulation in a rice field, I never hesitated to say that there were Taugs in it; nor was I ever at fault. Now, listen a moment, Sir Edward; we are here alone at this end of the terrace; the young ladies are yonder by themselves; Master Willy is gathering flowers; Captain Jonathan is at the other end chatting with M. Lorédan; nobody, therefore, is able to hear or suspect even the subject of our conversation."

"A plague on you, Nizam! what do you mean?" said

Sir Edward, with that regardless tone of voice which appeared to indicate little interest on his part in the disclosures which his interlocutor was about to make him.

"Sir Edward," pursued Nizam, "upon my daily return from the chase, Miss Elmina, notified of my approach by the barking of Elphy, always hastened forth as far as Honing-Clip to hear, such is her eagerness for anything connected with animals, the latest anecdote I might have gathered in my wanderings. You know she is an enthusiast in the pursuit of these stories. To-day, she failed to meet me; and just when I felt sure she would be all enquiring after her daily episode, she bade me sing an old ballad, which had not been heard here for three years. After the song, I whispered to her:

"Miss Elmina, I have a most interesting page of anecdote for your natural history!" At any other time, yesterday even, she would have bounded like a gazelle at the information; to-day, she scarcely heeded me; I, then, merely added:

"A beautiful anecdote, Miss Elmina, about a lion and a black monkey!" She looked at me with evident distraction; and replied:

"To-morrow I will hear your tale;" after which, with her arm around Miss Rita, they both walked away together and are yet, I see, arm in arm, in close conversation. Sir Edward, I am untaught in the meaning of this conduct; but, to me, it bodes no good."

"Nizam, this indicates that Miss Elmina has ceased to be a little girl whom we amuse with strange stories of wild beasts."

"Your pardon for my bluntness, Sir Edward; but that

is not the expression of your own mind upon this subject. . . . Will you, now, allow me to explain myself with greater detail? . . ."

"It would prove useless, my gallant Nizam. . . . Captain Jonathan is now retiring, and Lorédan is coming over to join us. . . . How ill or well founded soever your conjectures may be, do not declare them to any body."

"You have said enough; I am satisfied, Sir Edward. . . . Yet, when I find her alone, I shall require from Miss Elmina an explanation of what I have remarked."

Inadvertently, to every appearance, Nizam then turned his steps towards the young women, and without ostensibly seeking for an opportunity, had concluded to fall in with them casually, as it were, that he might provoke Elmina to account for her late strange indifference to the wild stories of lions and black monkeys in which she had formerly so delighted.

With his habitual ease of address and language, Sir Edward took the arm of Lorédan within his own, remarking, as he did so, in that tired tone of voice which comes of *ennui* and the absence of every serious preoccupation:

"Miss Elmina is an adorable creature, and a thing fraught with danger to the unwary. Lorédan, I do not know what, in this desert, I dread more, the glare of the panther's or the glance of Elmina's eyes. Yonder, but a while ago, under the tree, I saw them, as she hung, entranced, upon the sad notes of the soldier's song, sparkling and gleaming with so bright a lustre that, in a moment of distraction and wild fancy, I had well nigh hastened to gather two fallen stars."

"Edward!" cried Lorédan with a burst of forced laugh-

ter, "your thoughts are like the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' of your own great poet WILLIAM. Ordinarily, you are more natural; as to gathering stars, it is an occupation in which I have never had the novel pleasure to see you engaged. Perhaps Elmina has been ensnaring your affections. May be you are in love with her?"

"My very dear Lorédan, I would give my fifth inheritance, the legacy of my last aunt, to possess the mastery over her heart."

"And what use would you make of your lordship?"

"I would then seek her in marriage from Captain Jonathan."

"When?"

"This very evening, lest some chief of the Makidas would carry her off to-morrow."

"Bah! a tatooed black, and a worshiper of Manitous!"

"But, Lorédan, what sort of a being would you expect her to marry in this wilderness? Besides her uncle and brother, there is not another white face about her. It is evident then that, eventually, she would find herself forced, notwithstanding his Manitous, to link her fortunes with one or other of these tatooed princes."

"Well! suppose for the moment, Edward, that you are Elmina's favored partner: how do you propose to shape your future career?"

"My life will be devoted to commerce. These forests of logwood, more extensive far than the peninsular woodlands of Yucatan, I will uproot; I will harvest the ebony and the dragon tree; my cargoes of honey and wax, of the rarest quality, will stock the markets of Malabar and Coromandel, of Japan and China, will be unladen upon

the isles of the Sonde, and ride at anchor in the harbors of Capetown. Jonathan's modest system of exchange will assume colossal proportions, so little will I dread to welcome to the bay of Agoa the traffic of the universe. I will amass an untold wealth for myself, and with it build up the shattered fortunes of another. . . . What do you think of my plan, my young friend?"

Lorédan held down his eyes, and for a short while maintained a thoughtful silence; he then continued the conversation:

"You, Sir Edward, are shackled by no previous affections; if you are minded to make your request, I see no moral impediment which could hinder your success."

"But, my dear Lorédan, I am loath to seek any lady in marriage. You forget that we were simply making a supposition. Is that loving Elmina?"

"You are then, Sir Edward, averse to marriage?"

"There, now, you are indulging in more pleasantry. I averse to marriage! What an expression! The fact is that I was on the very eve of wedding three several times!"

"And, in the end, you concluded to remain a bachelor, Sir Edward!"

"Egad! that I did. . . . The very moment I present myself to a young lady, some other man passes by and takes her along with him! It is my fatality! There are destinies like this. I will admit, however, for this misfortune has not blunted my usual sense of justice, that this triple check upon my conjugal aspirations has very materially contributed to my welfare upon all my travels. Shipwreck, fire, duels, tigers, serpents, robbers have, at *all times*, respected in me the man ever unfortunate in his

affections, one whose policy, gotten out by the Life Insurance of Heaven, guarantees him against the united perfidy of beast and elements. Whenever a thunder-bolt was about to demolish me, you would have declared that a voice cried out :

“ Have respect for a man who has made his escape from the miseries of three marriages ! ”

“ And the thunder-bolt spared me to fall with thrilling effect upon my married neighbor.

“ However, certain controlling influences would, I agree, determine me to play the leading character in a wedding once more. Here, for instance, I would not find myself too ill-disposed to make Elmina my wife. The reason is this, and it is a simple one. In London or Paris, a bachelor may gratify to satiety his passion for a solitary existence, without impeding the progress of civilization ; and the zeros will file one after the other upon the civil registers with a celerity which little regrets the absence of a single unit. Here in the desert, however, the thing is otherwise : an arduous duty devolves upon the first settlers. In the terrestrial paradise, Adam could not, without impeding the progress of the race, have indulged a preference for the bachelor’s freedom.

“ I will confess then that, the other day, I did entertain serious thoughts of matrimony ; it would have been my fourth endeavor in that direction ; and I would, doubtless, have again made the final step forward, did I not fear that between myself and Miss Elmina might intervene some Makidas brave with brass rings in his nose and a brace of reptiles tatooed into his dusky arms. In that event the humiliation would, as you can well understand, be so over-

whelming, that nothing would enable me to survive it. But, Lorédan, how are your own *affaires du cœur* prospering? You were just now enjoying a few confidential moments with the Captain, the only father-in-law whom God has permitted to set foot across the tenth degree of latitude. Tell me, was there any family secret wrapt up in your conversation?"

"Not the shadow of one, Edward. Captain Jonathan is too definite in his expressions, and his countenance more so, perhaps, than his words, indicates the character of his thoughts. Our presence here is beginning to grow irksome to him. Here and there his words were as blunt as a tar's and, which is worse, just as full of meaning. His nephew, Willy, is, if I make out correctly, causing him a degree of painful anxiety.

"'I can no longer recognize Willy,' he said to me; 'there he is; he neglects his work, he is forever dreaming of distant voyages, so much so, that on your departure I entertain fears that it will be vain to deter him from following you.'"

"Lorédan, my purpose is fixed. . . . For a time back I hesitated; but what you have told me has determined my uncertainty; if, Lorédan, we hasten our departure from this place, all my plans for the furtherance of your sacred interests are undermined. It is essential that we prolong our stay at the Virginia, until such time as we shall be called upon to vacate the premises. We must remain here."

"And how will you effect our stay, Sir Edward?"

"I will make a sacrifice of myself."

"Do you mean, sue for the hand of Miss Elmina?"

"I mean more even, Lorédan; henceforth I purpose to make myself indispensable beneath this roof. Let us only gain time; it is absolutely necessary. When you see me at work, then you will understand me."

"Explain yourself, my dear Edward, and let us talk the matter over together. . . ."

"I have carefully studied every step which I propose to make. . . . Do you think that Jonathan's uneasiness has escaped me unnoticed? It is a state of mind through which he may very well be conceived to be passing. An old man has formed habits of domestic life, to which he is as tenaciously addicted as he is to his practices of religion. On the other hand, our advent here has, it must be admitted, occasioned no little disturbance. Honest old Jonathan has become a stranger in his own house. As late even as to-night, upon the terrace, he was not so much as addressed by the young folks; and I can very readily conceive that he finds himself at a loss to account for the recent conduct of his nephew and niece. Uncles, young or old, are more keenly susceptible than fathers: anything and everything they find a source of annoyance. Do you think, then, that it is an easy task to wind up the unstrung feelings of old Captain Jonathan? Were I to charge you with this care, your resignation would not await the experience of the duties of the office. Take my word for it, Lorédan, your countrymen were not made to be the pioneers of civilization. . . . But one word more, Lorédan, do you propose to ask the hand of Miss Rita?"

"From whom shall I ask it?"

"Zounds! man, from herself! She is here her only connection!"

"Well!" said Lorédan with a sigh, "for all that furthers matters, I did propose myself to her to-day."

"You say that with a sigh? . . . Yes, I understand . . . the consummation of your happiness is not possible here, in these wilds. The minister, the notary, the civil recognition—these are without your reach. I see the impediment. However, Rita's consent is enough, and at the very first opportunity, on your first voyage . . ."

"Sir Edward," replied Lorédan, somewhat irritated, "your infernal address plucks a man's secret out of his very heart! . . . Your good intention, of course"—he added smilingly—"you will plead in justification of your own conduct. To render a friend a service, you lay your snares, as if to entrap an enemy. I know you. . . Here, bind my hands. . . I yield myself a willing captive to your well-meant treachery. Yes, to-day, I did dare to utter the word matrimony, the sacred, the sacramental word. . ."

The countenance of Sir Edward was unable to conceal an expression of pity which, however, amid the gathering darkness and the shade trees, passed unnoticed. Recovering that habitual cast of features indicative of no inward emotion, he said:

"Lorédan, let me set my trap for you once more. . . What answer did Rita make you?"

"For the first time I remarked an expression of tenderness upon her features. You are aware with what a cold return she has hitherto responded to my affections. This indifference and discretion I attributed to the isolated condition in which she considers herself to exist, of a young *woman with no one on whom to rely for support and pro-*

tection. I, therefore, ventured to appear in another light before her."

"In a frightful shipwreck, sir," she said, "you saved my life at the peril of your own; my life is yours."

"Apart from snares, does not that answer satisfy you?"

"I find in it the slightest feeling of joy. . . . Do you not think that she expressed herself clearly enough, Sir Edward?"

"Lorédan, look through the blinds, yonder; the dark figure of Captain Jonathan, who is pacing up and down the lower hall. He is meditating sentence of exile against us. I am just going to make my home here."

"Sir Edward, you did not answer my question. . . ."

"Rita's answer is as clear as the night. Good evening."

Lorédan remained a while alone upon the terrace; then, stamping the ground with his foot, he muttered to himself:

"This devil of a fellow will damn me."



## CHAPTER VII

## AN AFRICAN NIGHT.

RELIEVING his mind by this burst of feeling against Sir Edward, Lorédan advanced to the door step of the Virginia, where he could watch Sir Edward's movements and study the working of this well laid scheme which was to secure for them a permanent residence beneath their present hospitable shelter. Through an aperture in the blinds, he could see and hear everything. Sir Edward was seated at a round table, disposing the pieces upon a chess board. Jonathan's face was radiant with joy.

"Captain Jonathan," said Edward, "had I been earlier aware of your passion for the game, I certainly would not have suffered you to consume twenty days with your pupil, here, in a *tête-à-tête* over a chess table."

"Elmina," replied Jonathan, "is too giddy ever to become engrossed in this game. The little interest she manifests in it is on account of the *castles*, which in India we call *elephants*. My nephew Willy falls asleep over his

very first *move*. I will soon be obliged to play alone, like the fakir on the banks of the Caveri."

"Captain, you have traveled considerably, I perceive, and lived in India, which explains to me your passion for chess. I am, myself, but waiting for my first white hairs to deliver myself up to the game with a real Indian enthusiasm. Do you know the brahmin Tieki, of Djagrenat's four verses on chess?"

This noble game, this Indian play  
Uprises to the highest arts;  
It gives to youth the ancient's years,  
And youth to age again imparts.

"Well sung! Will you permit me to ask you for a copy of these verses?" said Jonathan, grasping the hand of Sir Edward.

"I will engrave them upon an acacia leaf for you. The brahmin Tieki is an old man of a hundred and eleven years; and one day, at Djagrenat, he gave me this advice: 'My son, that you may enjoy a long life, play chess every evening, after supper. From the moment that you have formed the habit of consecrating an hour every evening to this pastime, it becomes impossible for you to die, for you are always obliged to play the next day.' The depth of Indian wisdom discovers itself in this declaration. At Paris, M. DE LA BOURDONNAIS pointed out to me the chevalier DE BARNEVILLE, the doyen of chess players; he was acquainted with LOUIS XVI and showed PHILIDOR his first moves. Death is so accustomed to see M. de Barneville, at noon, moving his first pawn, that the grim messenger always lacks the courage to disturb him. . . . It is your *move*, Captain."

The game fairly started, Willy and the two young ladies appeared in the hall; Lorédan entered after them. All gathered in a circle around the players.

Elmina, leaning upon the back of her uncle's arm-chair, followed the successive moves with a very distracted interest.

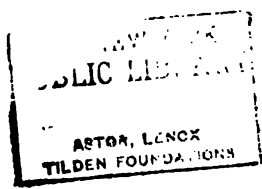
Sir Edward was, to all appearances, lost amid combinations, upon which the destiny of a world depended. With his eyes steadily fixed upon the chess board, nothing that was transpiring about him was able to provoke even a single glance.

In his heart, Lorédan admired him. "What a man!" he would repeat to himself; "who would not believe, from his deep recollection, that Sir Edward is playing a serious game, and that his fortune and his repose are at stake between those two ranks of black and white!"

In Jonathan there was nothing feigned! his features had lost that habitual tinge of melancholy which solitude never fails to trace even upon the countenance of her most fervent votaries.

After a cruel prostration from weariness, old Jonathan was now entering upon a moral convalescence; Sir Edward was his saving physician. With what satisfaction the good old gentleman looked down into the lists upon the intellectual struggle of these two little armies, whose maneuvers were directed with equal skill of combination! His countenance beamed with the joy of crowned hopes; henceforth, he had nothing more to ask of Heaven. Those alone, unacquainted with the all-absorbing nature of this innocent passion, can form no idea of the happiness of Jonathan. Nobody breathed a syllable.





Now and then, Elmina would shrug her graceful shoulders with an exquisite affectation, at infortunate Nizam, who was standing in the door way, like a figure in a frame, rehearsing his pantomime of the lion and the black monkey, and still pursuing Miss Jonathan with his unpublished fragment of natural history.

Willy feigned to follow the game, but his eyes sought out every object in the room, in turn, to fix their attention upon that one which was the most engaging.

Unmoved as the others, in his position beside the players, Lorédan wandered to and fro among his own thoughts, pausing only when the opportunity, naturally offered, to rest his admiring eyes upon the lovely form of Rita, whose beautiful head, resting upon the right shoulder of Elmina, mingled its dark wavy locks with the blonde ringlets of her companion.

This heavenly *tableau* of two smiling angels hovering about the silvery brow of the old man rose up before him, but never once did Sir Edward deign to raise his eyes to gaze upon the radiant vision: and when the exultant voice of Jonathan announced his victorious *checkmate*, Sir Edward remained still absorbed, even in his defeat. If the pretty hand of Elmina had not, in playful raillery, soon roused him from his protracted meditations, aurora would, perhaps, have found him before the chess table, lost in an enquiry into the causes and effects of this unexpected *checkmate*.

Jonathan enjoyed his victory with an interior relish, dissimulating, however, lest his good luck might prostrate or discourage his opponent.

"Miss Elmina," said Sir Edward, assuming a serious

expression, "did you indulge your pretty pleasantries, at the expense of a player of the Westminster club, you would incur a fine of twenty-five pounds sterling."

"Oh! you are unjust, Sir Edward," said Elmina, disengaging herself from Rita's embrace; "it is easy to see that you have lost. When I took your red mandarin bonnet the game was over; you are merely seeking an excuse for your defeat. That is not nice, Sir Edward."

"My niece," said Jonathan with that expression of conciliation which victory lends to the heart and to the features, "my dear Elmina, you are but a novice at chess, and you are not aware of all the importance we attach to the end of a game, even after the game is finished. . . . Sir Edward, I will play you a return game."

"Pardon me, Captain Jonathan, just allow me to take back my last move. . . . The *mate* was not a forced one. . . . By moving my king's castle's pawn, I would have been able to save myself and to continue the game. . . . In chess, the right idea always strikes me the day after."

"To-morrow, then, Sir Edward, we will try it again. . . . And would it not be well to begin earlier?"

"A good idea, Captain; we will limit our tournament to three games."

"We might also occupy a few hours during the heat of the day . . . . unless. . . ."

"Oh! from morning till night! if you are willing, Captain. . . . I, really, never had but one passion, chess. . . ."

"A noble passion! Sir Edward," said Jonathan, shaking the hand of his adversary. . . . "To-morrow, then."

It was the hour when every one is at liberty to retire or to *farther* enjoy the freshness of the evening air. Good-nights

were given and received between friends and relations; Elmina and Rita left the apartment with Captain Jonathan. Willy had already disappeared. Sir Edward and Lorédan, with the indolent gait of persons who have nothing to say to one another, wandered out, as if by chance, upon the terrace.

It was a tropical night, with its myriads of bright spangles, its dark chaos of forests and distant mountains. The atmosphere was alive with the secret whisperings of love, and upon every wave that disturbed its calm, floated mysterious sensations which, from the early dawn of creation, the heavens have poured out upon the desert, and which have never been spoken by the lips of man. From the inland vales far away, confused and solemn sounds were borne upon the night air, as if the loud waves of the ocean, the thunder of the cataract and the wild uproar of a thousand savage minstrels in the neighboring woodland, were mingled in one unknown tongue to celebrate the dusky splendors of the night.

Sir Edward, leaning against an acacia, the furthest removed from the house, cast his eyes about him and lowering his voice to its deepest whisper, said :

"Well, my dear Lorédan, are you satisfied with me?"

"You are adorable, Sir Edward, adorable for your devotedness!"

"What devotedness! I have suppressed Curtius. . . . Unfortunately, I am not pleased with you, Lorédan."

"Perhaps I have neglected to second you . . . . that's possible. . . . Let us see . . . . explain yourself. . . ."

"We are never alone together for a quarter of an hour in this house. I believe, that since our arrival here, this

is our second talk together, and for this one we may thank my game of chess. I am anxious, then, to point out to you your shortcomings."

"My shortcomings! . . . Have I failings towards you, Sir Edward?"

"Towards what other person could you have them? Among friends, want of confidence is a failing; here, in the wilderness, it may very well be criminal. . . . Listen to me, Lorédan, the hour is a solemn one, and my words are solemn; allow me, then, to assume for a while an air of gravity; it is of no consequence. . . . Lorédan, you appear to have lost sight of everything; I have forgotten nothing. You had a woman's love to win for yourself and a fortune to amass for another. What has become of this double project of love and wealth? . . . Do not interrupt me, Lorédan. . . . If your love was but a spark caught in the conflagration of the 'Malabar' and extinguished in the shipwreck that followed; if your plans for rebuilding your shattered fortune were not conceived in your heart, you will not, I hope, suffer me to perish little by little under the small fire of Jonathan's *checkmates*. That which you call devotedness would be an absurdity and a dishonor even, if meant but to further the whims of a love-sick youth; whereas I would feel honored where my humble services, would avail to secure those resources which a noble son owes to an unfortunate father."

"Sir Edward," replied Lorédan, his hand in that of his friend, "what I told you the day we stepped off the raft of the 'Malabar,' that I repeat to you to-day, and now with far greater emphasis; for twenty days have since gone by *and those twenty days*, it may very well be, have brought

on my father's agony. Do you think, Sir Edward, that, with so many keen observers about me, it were prudent to suffer the slightest indication of my inward depression to appear outwardly? For this hospitality of Jonathan I must, at least, show the appreciation which I feel. There is a deception for a good end as well as a feigning for evil purposes; and you are, yourself, noble Edward, a living instance of this. I do love Rita; nor is my love for her a caprice. Leave fancy to the cold attachments of your northern cities; for the sea, solitude and the tropics beget a genuine passion in the heart. I do love this young girl, and, when I make this declaration to you, I seem to see forest and star fading away before my eyes, and the radiant vision of a woman looming up before me.

"Whither, now, will my affection conduct me? I do not know. Does any one ever know, when he loves, towards what goal he is hurrying? We love because an all conquering attraction, sprung from the rays of the sun and the beauty of a radiant face, makes us love. But do not for a moment, Sir Edward, believe that the appalling memory of my unhappy father has been lost in the absorbing interest of this attachment. The heart of man is still large enough for two grand schemes. My projects by day turn upon two names; my dreams by night are haunted by two sweet phantoms. When, with the morning light, I rise to greet the waking of this mighty creation about me, it appears to me that one of those rocks, which bursts assunder to suffer a tree of iron strength to leap forth from its bosom, furnishes my mind with some resourceful thought, some revelation, some saving expedient. When, at evening, the firmament is lit on high, it seems as though

I could see the heavens disposing the marvelous order of its constellations into words, to read me an answer in characters of fire.

"My mind is wandering; to prove to myself that I am not crazed, I must ever repeat to myself that I am a fool.

"Yes, you, too, I have deceived by this feigned calm, this masking of my countenance, this disguising of my body. If you could but understand what I suffered in the hall during your game! Rita was as beautiful as grace, radiant with charms to ruin a cherub; her long dark hair, fondled by the fingers of Elmina, hung down in wavy masses upon the marble purity of her chaste neck; her heavenly features, their every line of loveliness, set in serious attention, discovered a gentle smile rippling among the pearls and corals of her childlike lips.

"There I stood before her, my soul upon my tongue, eager, as with a longing for life, to catch her first quiet glance. That glance was turned away without meeting mine. It was a ray, a beam that lit up the apartment, leaving me alone in darkness. The thought, then, which diverted that look was not a thought of me! and yet she told me to-day: *My life is yours!* Yes, although late I do understand: passion makes a tiny spark burn with the blaze of a conflagration. Yes, it is a debt of gratitude which has rendered me master of Rita's life. It was I, she believes, who snatched her from the waves, and it is to this falsehood that I am indebted for that cold sentiment which will never be love! Rather than purchase her affections at the price of this unworthy duplicity, I would renounce every claim upon her gratitude. If, one day, *she must* give me her love, or at least accept me for her

husband, I will be pure in her eyes, in yours, Sir Edward, and in my own."

The young man dropped the hand of Sir Edward which he had been pressing tightly within his own, and flung himself upon the grass.

Sir Edward folded his arms upon his breast, and before venturing to express himself waited until his natural calm returned; for this warm outburst on the part of Lorédan had sensibly affected him.

"Yes," said he after a long pause; "yes, you have transferred your own convictions to me, Lorédan; your soul is entirely wrapped in mine. I, now, think with your mind. . . ."

Then, changing his tone of voice as he proceeded, he added:

"Lorédan, I avow to you, that in the main, I like these strange situations. They clothe life with an annoying charm, and without them, existence would become monotonous and dead. . . . This premised, I perceive that we have not advanced farther than we did the first day; this is but little progress upon the long journey which we must yet accomplish. I say *us*, because I have formed the habit of leading the lives of others; which is easier, by far, than living for yourself. Something unforeseen and of a desperate character is called for, something falling from the equator upon both of us. Then, standing upon the ruins of my own combinations, I feel that before I would abandon a friend, I would unite my destinies with his, and link to him my own personal risks. I would precipitate myself into the gulf of matrimony to save him. I would espouse Elmina, with a quarter of Africa for her

of the genius who keeps guard over us, our distrustful doubts, is obstinately bmate salvation."

Lorédan was about to express his when he felt the open hand of Sir Edward. At a short distance from the dark thicket friends were conversing, the noise of approach was heard.

"It is Nizam on his nightly patrol," very low voice. "Don't stir from this will meet him, as if by chance, and get with him."

Sir Edward emerged from his displacement himself upon the path along treading; they soon met.

"Ever afoot, my gallant Nizam, da Sir Edward, clapping Jonathan's old shoulder: "a person can sleep tranqui

Sir Edward was unable to repress a movement of pleasure at this announcement; Nizam remarked it and continued:

"This news suits you wonderfully, does it not, Sir Edward? It gives you an opportunity of quitting this tiresome wilderness; which, if you ever lose sight of it, will take you six months to find. . . . But, confound me! I thought of it too late. . . . I have, I fear, said too much; I have, I believe, committed a folly. Captain Jonathan is loath to mention his commerce to white, black or bronze. . . . Act as if I had said nothing, Sir Edward."

"Nizam, you are too clever to commit a folly and hardly cunning enough to outwit me. . . . You are anxious for my departure, in the hope that I will lead you off with me. Nizam, be sincere, and I pledge you the word of a fellow countryman, that you will not repent it."

"Sir Edward, if that is the tone you assume, I will be candid with you. It is time; I feel that my stay here has been too long: my humor is a roving one. It is not the nature of an Indian or of an Englishman to put up long at the same lodgings. There was but one link binding me to the Virginia. I was attached to Miss Elmina. She was twelve years old when I came here: and since that time I have watched this beautiful girl put forth every blossom of her rich loveliness; and were the crown of India at my disposal hers would be the brow upon which I would place it. You understand, of course, Sir Edward, that at my age and in my condition of an humble servant, my affection for Miss Elmina cannot have anything but the character of a respectful friendship. Yet this sentiment is so ardent that I am forced to look upon the change

of late operated in her character, as an insupportable misery. Formerly, when, reclining like a slave at the feet of my young queen, I caused emotions of pleasure or sadness to succeed each other upon her fair features, by the recital of my brave adventures upon the chase, I would not have exchanged my seat upon the terrace for the throne of Sir WILLIAM BENTINCK.

"Often have I imperilled my life, yonder, at a great distance from here, in my endeavor to discover, within the depths of that untraveled and dangerous valley, the naked rock upon which Elmina's father, the courageous Arthur Jonathan, to insult the lions and elephants, engraved the name of his daughter. I well knew that this discovery would be repayed with a pressure of the hand and the smile of an angel, and this thought would have enabled me to rush into the midst of all the claws and manes in the wilderness. But now, it is at an end. My happiness was a modest one, was it not, Sir Edward? At least, I was contented with it; it sufficed for my life; it left me nothing to desire. Behold me again fallen into my original nothingness. However, while I dwell beneath the roof of Captain Jonathan, I shall not cease to fulfil my duty as a faithful servant; but, at the very first opportunity that is presented for departure, I will pray him to give me again the liberty of the sea."

By the fitful gleam of the star light piercing through the dense foliage, Sir Edward saw tears trickling down the bronzed cheeks of Nizam.

The domestic advanced to the border of the terrace, and after regarding the mansion for a length of time, with a *move of his hand* motioned Sir Edward to come forward.

In this spot, the acacias were grouped around in a circle, and their bending branches touched the naked sward of the terrace; behind this natural curtain, they could see, without themselves becoming open to observation.

His eyes following a second gesture from Nizam, Sir Edward saw a living *tableau* which lent an ineffable charm to the animated features of this most glorious night.

The curtains of a single kiosk looking out upon the facade were drawn, and the balcony was lighted up both by the soft, steady brilliancy of the apartment within and by the quivering brightness of the stars without, so resplendent at this hour, that the sun, instead of abandoning the heavens, seemed to have been parcelled out into a thousand glittering fragments.

From the elliptical back ground of this aerial frame work stood out, in luminous relief, a group of two young females leaning over the balcony and their attention wandering out upon the landscape. Even at that distance, it was not difficult to perceive that the grand spectacle of this tropical night was not the engrossing subject of their thoughts, for the words which were whispered in a low voice between them sounded like the accents of confidential mystery, while they were, doubtless, the formulæ in which they gave utterance to the intimate expression of enthusiasm with which they embraced the charms of this magnificent night.

"Sir Edward," said Nizam, "I am curious to see whether Miss Elmina will salute her old servant with a wave of her hand; I am going to pass before the house, with my head down, as if I had observed nothing. Allow me, Sir Edward, to ask you to ignore, to-morrow, in the presence of Captain

Jonathan, what I told you relative to the Chinaman in the bay of Agoa."

"Nizam," replied Sir Edward, "I need you; remain at the Virginia; for me, if you no longer care to reside there for the sake of another. You understand me? I need you."

Nizam replied with a gesture of equivocal compliance, and stepped out of the path, moving forward as if engaged in his nightly round of inspection. Suddenly, he raised his head; a voice from the kiosk had addressed him by name. With a bound he darted forward to the foot of the balcony occupied by Elmina. The young girl leaned out over the balustrade, and said in her most winning accents:

"Nizam, I hear that the Chinese merchant arrived this evening. You are going to see him at day-break, are you not?"

"I will see him now, if necessary, Miss Elmina."

"No, in the morning will do. I have a commission for you."

"Let me have it, Miss Elmina; I am all attention and readiness. My whole body listens when you speak."

"Select for me two *talis* of pearl and two necklaces of coral, two pieces of fine muslin with gold spangles and two pieces of striped gingham, every thing by twos, do you hear?"

"I do, Miss Elmina."

"Should you find two speckled *saris*, bring them along likewise. . . . That's all, Nizam."

"Have you no further orders, Elmina?"

"Nothing else, just now."

"Do you not wish to hear that little anecdote about the *lion* and the . . ."

"Oh, Nizam! it is too late now for anecdotes. . . . Good night, my brave Nizam; and be sure, to-morrow, that you do not forget the two coral necklaces."

"I will forget nothing, Miss Elmina."

Nizam made a respectful bow and moved away into the plantation. A few moments later, one of the young girls left the balcony of the kiosk, but Sir Edward was unable to distinguish whether it was Rita or Elmina.

A young man, moving cautiously beneath the projecting cornice of the Virginia, threw something heavy and shapeless upon the balcony. The girl, remaining within the railings of the kiosk, picked it up, and, bowing as if her thanks, drew the blinds and disappeared.

Sir Edward, little given, when alone, to dissimulating the powerful emotions by which he was stirred, crossed his hands above his head, saying to himself: Well, now, see how that droll fellow Lorédan, has tricked me! and how I have deceived myself! . . . . He is much more fortunate and happy than I dared to believe him. His gifts are welcome even at midnight.

Sir Edward thought it waste of time now to return to the copse, in which he had left his friend. However, as this departure would not draw him far out of his way, he bent his steps mechanically in that direction, reflecting, as he walked forward, upon the perfidy of men and friends.

A body somewhat darker than a shadow, and occupying the path on his right, caused him to draw back a step. At such an hour, and amid such surroundings, every thing which is not dead is an enemy.

Sir Edward, in a little while, recognized the place at which he left Lorédan; and, at the sound of his approach,

it proved to be Lorédan himself, who stood up to meet his friend.

"Oh! it is you, Lorédan," said Sir Edward, with a voice which, with each succeeding syllable, manifested less astonishment.

"And who else, do you suppose, it could be?" said the young man, reaching out his hand in search of his friend's.

"You are right; I was under the impression that I separated from you at a further distance."

"I did not move from this place. . . ."

"Well! you have actually not stirred from this spot, waiting for me? . . . I thought I had seen you passing in front of the house. . . . I was deceived, then. . . . Night is the mother of error."

"Did you gather anything that interests us, from Jonathan's man?"

"We will talk about that to-morrow. It is getting very late. Let us separate for the night. . . . The sentry, yonder, on the moat, is casting uneasy glances in our direction: and in the dark, you know, there is nothing more like a foe than a friend. It is prudence, then, on our part not to expose ourselves as targets for a rifle ball, which before long may be hurrying over in this direction. Let us, moreover, respect the repose of those two young ladies who, by this time, are fast asleep. . . ."

"I am sure, Edward, that the whole family was fast asleep two hours ago. We had better refrain from too early a violation of any family arrangements. . . . There are our two savages, torch in hand, waiting for us. Good-night, Sir Edward; I will be with you at dawn."

"Yes, I want to rise with the sun, to-morrow."

"In that case, then, let us off to bed, Edward."

"Very well, Lorédan; I was looking for some pleasantry or other with which to dismiss you. Nothing makes a person feel so sad as a gloomy good-night given and received."

"Oh! Edward, how happy you are to look upon every thing with your smile of indifferent good nature! . . ."

"Well! by heavens! Lorédan, do as I do. The lightest saying may hide the gravest purpose. There is in the *Liki* the following axiom:—*A cheerful word is the language of a serious heart.*"

"Well said, Edward; you have betrayed yourself. Henceforth, I know you."

"You do not, but you will know me. Good-night."



## CHAPTER VIII

## A CORRESPONDENCE.

*Sir Edoard to Loredan de Gessin.  
Noon, beneath a banana tree at the bay of Agoa.*

THIS morning, on awaking, you cursed me, dear Lorédan. My experience has been a curse at night and a blessing in the morning. I, thus, trouble myself very little over the first angry movements which I stir up in my friends. So, you found my chamber empty; you descended to the great hall, you walked around about Honing-Clip, you call on me, and I made no answer. Captain Jonathan, in fine, informed you that I had taken my departure.

"For once, your heart's blood ceased its flow; you looked about you in every direction, and nothing but a frightful isolation greeted you on all sides.

"Behold how love deals with the strongest; do not love, and you clothe yourself with the strength of the oak; love and you are weakened as a reed. Be of good heart, my *frail friend*, I will watch while you sleep.

"Before dawn, I was already in the great hall of the Virginia, bent over the chess table, in the attitude of one lost in deep thought, whose universe is limited to sixty-four squares of wood, besides which all else is as it were not. I was aware that his engagements would rouse Captain Jonathan at a very early hour. Nor was I deceived; he shortly afterwards entered the hall and found me buried in my calculations.

"God knows how it pained me to deceive that excellent gentleman in the manner I did! My intentions, however, will, I trust, insure my forgiveness. Before Jonathan opened his lips, I addressed him:

"Captain, I am, you see, wholly absorbed in an affair of considerable importance; I am endeavoring to recall a celebrated game; the master piece of de La Bourdonnais. With a little patience, I will be able to find all the various moves.

"Now, Captain Jonathan, picture to yourself M. de La Bourdonnais playing this incredible game. Gathering his pieces into a certain position, he struck the table with his fist and cried out to his adversary:

*"You will be CHECKMATED in nine moves!"*

"And the great player's prediction was verified. The day I showed this extraordinary problem to the brahmin Tauly, at Elephanta, he exclaimed: 'The blue God has become incarnate, the eleventh time, in a chess player!'

"You can conceive, my dear Lorédan, the delight and actual stupefaction of Jonathan. He lost sight of his Chinese merchant ship and his commerce of exchanges: he followed every disposition of my pieces; and lest he might disturb me fairly held his breath. At this moment,

Nizam entered the apartment to receive his last instructions from the Captain.

"I feigned the most perfect astonishment when Jonathan informed me that his trader was in the bay of Agoa. I rose quickly, and said:

"Captain Jonathan, you have extended to us a noble hospitality; the moment is now at hand when it devolves upon us to testify our gratitude. The highway of the seas is once more open to us. We are about to take leave of you, but upon whatever land it may be our fortune to be cast hereafter, believe me, that we shall ever preserve the memory of our kind reception, beneath your truly paternal shelter."

"These words I accompanied with not a little animation, my dear Lorédan, the more so that they were from the heart, and wanted but seasonableness to give them sincerity.

"Jonathan looked at the chess board and was preparing an answer, when an unlooked for circumstance came victoriously to my assistance.

"At this juncture, young Willy entered the hall with all the wild animation of a savage, and planting himself right in front of me, his hand in mine, he said in a voice full of vehemence:

"No, you shall not leave us! This too sudden departure would afflict my uncle and sadden all of us. Are you not well off here? Miss Rita, your friend's sister, is already a sister to Elmina; we eat at the same table and live beneath the same roof. Solitude, in a few days, rivets tighter the links of friendship and transforms friends into relatives. Sir Edward, you shall not leave us; we forbid you to start."

"Like myself, you say that this language of Willy was a cause of astonishment. Hitherto, Willy had conducted himself, in our midst, after the fashion of a veritable child of the wilderness; he had shunned our company with a studied care.

"All on a sudden, this Makida leaps from his lair, and, like a cannibal with his captive, binds me hand and foot, a prisoner within his forest thickets.

"If Willy's proposition and Jonathan's silent approbation had interfered with my plans, I would have defended my course with warmth: but everything they said put me too much at my ease to meet with the slightest opposition on my part. In reply to their remonstrances, I indulged in a long speech, with the tediousness of which I will not inflict you, but which may be re-stated in three words: We will remain.

"A ray of satisfaction lighted up the countenance of Jonathan. Decidedly, I am become necessary and even indispensable to his well being; self-love apart, I had not misjudged myself.

"At the same time, I received a light from above.

"'Captain Jonathan,' I addressed him, 'I trust you will make no difficulty in granting me a favor; I give you my word of honor that, in the use of it, I will employ the utmost precaution. Permit me to follow your convoy and domestics to the bay of Agoa; for three or four years I was a resident of Macao and Canton; I speak the language of the captain who trades with you, and who is, probably, only a Chinaman from the islands of the Sonde; I will gather from him at what ports he touches, and will direct a number of letters from these to our families, with information as to our whereabouts.

"This proposition met with no opposition. Jonathan favored me with some secret commissions, and Willy said he was dispensed from conducting the convoy farther than three miles of the bay, as, this time, the mandarin Sir Edward was very willing to manage the transactions of the Virginia. At dawn, Nizam and I set out on horseback.

"It was with a feeling of unutterable joy that I again traversed the banks of the Limpid Stream, and that endless aqueduct of tamarinds, along which we trailed the sail cloth which shipwreck had provided for our winding sheet. At the outskirts of the forest, our caravan halted. Farther than this, Nizam is forbidden to go; the black servants attached to the house, clothed in their own primitive style, alone enjoyed the privilege of presenting themselves to the ship's crew. These negroes are empowered to do the bartering upon their own account. Nizam, from a distance, oversees the transaction, employing for his special service Neptunio, his confidential man.

"You understand, now, what importance I attach to my descent to the bay. In the first place, I am thus enabled to get at the bottom of this secret commerce of the Virginia, a trade upon which I found all my hopes for your future.

"This, then, is my secret.

"For the rest, I await letters from you of which you will take four copies and confide all of them to the care of Nizam, to-morrow. Address these letters to your father; they will quiet any apprehensions and give him positive assurance of that which is to enable him to pass his remaining days with honor and esteem. In making this

promise, we will not, I am sure, run the risk of never fulfilling it. The means is yet in heaven; we will receive it.

"Nizam leaves Agoa at midnight, and will carry my letters to you in all confidence. You can put every reliance upon him. The brave servant is devoted to me. I am myself detained here a few days, well pleased that I may thus be of some little service to Captain Jonathan.

"Yours with sincere devotion,

EDWARD."

"P. S.—Before its departure, I opened my letter to add a few particulars of my occupations here, to-day. I have seen the Chinese captain. I retain my Tartar costume of the Zhé-Hol; by claiming a sort of Russo-Tartar-Chinese origin, I was able to dispense with the obliqueness of the eyes, and my brave captain has shown himself quite hospitable in my regard.

"We exchanged a few words, but very few; the Chinese are as miserly in the use of their words as if they were of silver. This fellow, more so than the rest of his countrymen, is chary of his language. He looks upon the moments spent in conversation as lost time.

"The truth is, however, that the Chinese are not much to blame for their economy of syllables; with a single one, they express everything they want to say. Is it not frightful to think that two years of our life are wasted in the utterance of adverbs, adjectives and articles?

"The Chinese, with their monosyllables and skeleton language, live ten years longer than ourselves. This captain has, it appears, discovered that proper names of two letters, as are all the proper names of his country, are still too long; instead, therefore, of styling himself *Li*, or *Hi*,

or *Ki*, he goes by no name whatever. I smile to think that I am writing to you from a place that does not exist, and that I am speaking to a man who, for economy's sake, refrains from employing a name: his signature is an acute accent.

"Between this fantastic creature and humanity, there appears to be no other connecting link than the excessive love of money.

"In his favor, I drew upon my cincture of Spanish dollars; and payed him in advance, with Brittanic liberality, the postage on the four letters which he is to deposit or cause to be deposited for you at Ceylon, Capetown, the Ile de France and the Ile Bourbon. I further promised to double this postage on his return.

"He sold me two pair of marvelously beautiful bracelets, formed of tiny links of coral, delicately interwoven, after the fashion of those worn by the goddesses Lachmi and Svahâ in the pagodas of Bangalore. These jewels well deserve to be displayed upon the arms of the two divinities of the Virginia. Nizam just now hung them about Elphy's neck; and, pointing out the road to the house, pronounced the name Elmina.

"The intelligent brute uttered a cry of joy, as if he said: 'I understand;' and vanished like a flash.

"I am waiting for your letters.

E."

LORÉDAN DE GESSIN TO SIR EDWARD.

"There is a species of thanks which cannot be well expressed but by the accents of the human voice; of this *kind are those* which I owe you, my noble friend.

"Good Nizam delivered himself of your message with that exact sense of delicacy which appears to be the natural outcome of his action, look and bearing.

"To-day, after writing these four letters to my father, I blushed to think, whether I should here make mention of any topic, which is foreign to the duty I have been fulfilling. There are hours of holy recollection, upon which the most absorbing of profane thoughts should not intrude.

"These four letters contain my life: you understand it so thoroughly, that you will not confide to any but yourself the care of directing these, by the surest routes, to their proper destinations. In placing my letters therefore in your hands, I feel that my father is already perusing them.

"I press your hand.

L. DE G."



## CHAPTER IX

SIR EDWARD TO LOREDAN DE GESSIN.

*9 o'clock a.m., under a banana tree, at the bay of Agoa.*

THE Chinaman sails this evening; I will follow the vessel until it is lost below the horizon, and then begin my journey back to the Virginia, under the excellent escort of my savage Makidas. Fear nothing, therefore, for me from the dangers of the night.

"I have won the affections of these young men who lack nothing whatever of intelligence or grace and who, were they white, would be incomplete.

"I have made each of them some invaluable present, in the shape of pocket mirrors, Chinese fans, case knives and chains of polished brass.

"With two guineas I have rendered fifteen mortals happy.

"They actually adored me. For a quarter of an hour I assumed all the airs of a Manitou.

"When my wild projects of African ambition shall

have taken a form definite enough for a name, these are men whom I will find ready to do my bidding.

"To the king of the Makidas I sent a present of an elegant assortment of English weapons, and to the queen a toilet mirror, a roll of lace and a pair of coral ear-rings.

"Young Willy exercises a remarkable influence over these savages, I find; this popularity it will be necessary to counterbalance, not by reason of any hostile attitude we are to assume towards the Jonathans, God preserve us from such a course! but with a view to self-defence, in the event of any emergency.

"Life is a duel in which we are face to face with destiny, until death.

"We cannot find it hard, then, to convince ourselves, that within the store-house of the future there is laid by a number of fatal chances, which we must make it our duty to turn to our favor or to lessen by the prudence of our combinations.

"I have made a study of this commerce of exchange; the entire scheme is nothing but the primitive style of merchantile transactions, prior to the introduction of metal currency. It is the way the patriarchs bartered under their tents; the system of commerce which flourished at Henokia; an antediluvian sort of trade long since fossilized.

"Jonathan has unearthed it.

"Henokia was unfruitful in the produce of incense which was needed for its perfumes; Silon did not grow the bread required at its tables; an exchange therefore sprang up between these two markets. This is nature's method of barter. Our Chinese captain, however, did not appear at all loth to separate from nature that he might

get nearer to my Spanish piasters. I have hit upon this weak point and will not lose my advantage.

"It is clear to you, Lorédan, that a certain event may transpire which will not permit of your waiting six months at Jonathan's, for the return of this vessel. If Heaven, in whose countless stars there is stored away so much useless gold, would, to-morrow, for our sakes, drop down but one little specimen, and change our waking into the discovery of a fortune, it would, certainly, be an irksome task to tarry the smallest portion of a year, here, among the elephants and lions. At a single bound, you would clear the continent and the Atlantic to reach your father.

"Acting upon this reflection, I made a proposition to the Chinese captain that, on his return from Ceylon, he should hover off this coast. And, in the event of no merchandise which would repay him for his detour, I agreed to make over to him thirty quadruples, if he made for this shore. Between us, therefore, it was understood, that at the expiration of two months one of my domestics should station himself upon the bay to communicate with me as soon as the vessel would anchor. A secret, which for five gold pieces cash down and counted out, in Chinese, is inviolable on either hand.

"Now, my dear friend, I am able to read your heart, and I perceive that your nice sense of delicacy does not follow my conduct with entire approval.

"The fact is, that, at first view, no apparent reason can be alleged why, by an abuse, we may call it, of confidence, I should disturb every commercial arrangement of that worthy man who so nobly extended towards us his *hospitable protection*. And, indeed, what I did to-day, I would *not have attempted* yesterday, or the day before."

"Something new has come to light, Lorédan. Two long conversations between myself and Nizam have opened my eyes to much in the projects of Captain Jonathan. It would surprise you to learn how far I have advanced in his favor.

"You are by this time aware that, when despatching me in charge of his domestics, he committed to me certain secrets of this traffic; he is highly satisfied, Nizam tells me, with my conduct of affairs and has even dropped a significant hint which, since I heard it, has been for me the subject of long consideration.

"Lorédan, after God, it was Jonathan who saved our lives. For this inestimable benefit, then, it is fitting that we make him some suitable return.

"Miss Elmina, his niece, is a charming young lady; and were I opposed to such a step, she would certainly reconcile me to marriage. I am fully aware of the designs of the good old proprietor of the Virginia and I am going to anticipate them. I will ask for the hand of Elmina. There are some men whose boast it is that they are adepts in woman-love; I confess I have no connection with this school of *savants*; but, if I am not mistaken, Elmina has willingly gone to the expense of coquetting with me, and that she holds you, dear Lorédan, at a respectful distance.

"At one time, Duke and myself were entertained by her; and, at the game of chess, the other day, she plagued me with her delightful playfulness.

"Hence, before addressing myself to the uncle, I will pay my regards to the niece; our familiarity, which for the wilderness is an old one, will serve me well in this respect, and when the occasion offers I propose to turn the conversation upon marriage.

"This will be my starting point; and when I shall have sounded the dispositions of his niece, I will dare to stand before Jonathan.

"Were you, dear Lorédan, in your usual good humor, every word, in this last sentence, would suggest its parenthesis of epigrams. I am, indeed, conscious that, when I make marriage my topic, I render myself a pretty fair mark for pleasantry; I, alone, am aware of the deep seriousness of my project.

"I make no pretention whatever to be Elmina's lover. Happily, the grace and charm which encircle her shed a light about her, powerful enough to enable me to clear, at a bound, the four steps of esteem, friendship, love and adoration, which lead up the altar of Hymen.

"The thought which urges this union is intimately bound up with another, upon which you will look with, perhaps, a more serious face. This thought is that of a fortune. Fortune, dear Lorédan, is a mistress with whom I have often trifled and have never espoused.

"Often, when, in the course of my life, I have fallen heir to an estate of gold, I said to myself: 'Into what revels shall I now plunge to consume this new wealth.' It rested like an uneasy abundance upon me.

"In my Bible, I sought the length of the banqueting boards of AMASUERUS and BELSHAZZAR; ever dreading lest, at night, I should perish and in the morning find myself a ruined man in the hands of unknown heirs and heartless scoffers. For, as I look at it, a man may be ruined in two ways: the one, a wise sort of despoiling of one's self, the other, a piece of folly. He may, in the first place, run *through* his own fortune, or he may allow himself to be

undone by the greedy rapacity of collaterals, who will gather in his plenty, during his funeral.

"And now, who would have told me so! to-day, I regret the fortunes I have squandered!

"Life is nothing but one long regret at its closing. Oh! did I now possess what I have wasted, we would be kings, you and I, in the undiscovered realms of Africa! Upon the virgin lawns, within our natural parks, would grow every shrub and plant in Adam's flora, while beneath our balconies Noah's vast menagery would feed and frolic.

"This regret, once spoken between us, let there be an end to it. After all, of a hundred things after which we are ever striving, fortune is the easiest to acquire.

"Here, the field of fortune lies, fallow, before us; we have but to cultivate it. There are mines of gold everywhere; the most difficult to work are those in Peru.

"I would rather sow a guinea and reap a million on the bay of Agoa, than disembowel the strong coffers of the Cordilleras; my key would be wrenched in the lock, and myself forced to go begging in Lima.

"Alas! I hear you say, my dear Lorédan, it is time which we have not! It takes minutes to gather brass, hours to collect silver, years to amass gold. We want gold, and we have not years to acquire it.

"Danger presses; time is ambushed within these African defiles; it demands our money or our lives; we must surrender or perish; robbers make no delay! Lorédan, these are your thoughts and they are an injustice to Providence and a wrong to me!

"One moment of inspiration well employed outvalues a quarter of a century. There are, in knowledge, the secrets

of that moral alchemy which melts years into a potent elixir. Oh! would that, here, upon the bay of Agoa, we could see the smoke of some vast factory curling above the forest, and a communication opened with all the gifted pens of the world's industries! then would time never be robbed of the value of its minutes!

"But there is no question of harpooning whales; we care only to make a good haul, here, in the basin of Agoa.

"This leads me to sketch, in a word or two, what I witnessed yesterday, just before sunset. Really, this world knows very little about itself; it is, in this particular, much like man who inhabits it.

"Geographers flatter themselves that they have reached the apogee in their art, when they have succeeded, to their own satisfaction, in daubing a piece of paper with every shade of color, and then disfiguring it with a thousand zigzag lines, meant to delineate the surface of a country.

"Draughtsmen, who accompany long voyages, are content with reproducing the outline of the coast in the neighborhood of the port in which the vessel casts anchor. In the fore-ground, they paint a number of palm trees, two hideous savages stretched upon the grass and a mountain of indigo blue upon the horizon. Beneath the whole, in figured characters:—*View of . . . . .* any place you wish. Here you have a globe that is perfectly well known! It was with singular wisdom that God suited the size of the earth to the littleness of its explorers.

"You are able, Lorédan, to recall the gulf upon which, after the shipwreck, the hand of God so mercifully guided our little raft. At three miles from this place, northward, *I have discovered a world.* Did every body only take the

trouble to walk, the list of CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUSES would be long enough to encircle the globe.

"Picture to yourself a natural harbor, indented into a coastline of forest trees, with quays of polished granite edging an amphitheatre of sodgrass and wild flowers.

"Here is a port that has been waiting for a city during the last six thousand years, and no city exists here yet. It holds out delightful inducements to the merchant fleets that sail in sight, from the heavy barks of Saba to the swift packets of England; this unfortunate harbor has never succeeded in hauling in a cable, of fondling a keel upon its bosom, or bathing the feet of a custom house officer.

"I have, myself, raised an ideal city upon its gentle slope; I have peopled its moles: I have laid out in it avenues of laurel and sycamore, of avicennias, scheas, boababs and cocoa, which mingle their leafy branches with the masts of the fleets from Malabar and Coromandel.

"Later, this graceful looming vanished; the harbor is still in the midst of its tranquil shades, nothing changed in the beauty of its creation, and such it will ever remain, with its arms ever open, to receive no human dweller upon its beach.

"Following the ancient practice of travelers whose fortune it is to happen upon a discovery, I have given a name to this elegant harbor, and the name which I chose was your own, my dear Lorédan. Not a bird in the tropics was absent at the christening, and all lent the sweet charm of their melodious voices to the occasion.

"Would you believe that a little thing like this augured well for your future? It appeared to me that, after hav-

ing weathered many a storm, I saw the vessel of your fortune steering into this port of which I am the god-parent and you the patron.

"Yours very devotedly,

EDWARD."

*P. S.*—"Nizam is just setting out and will deliver this letter to you secretly; I have communicated with Captain Jonathan, by the same post."



## CHAPTER X

### AT SUNRISE.

THE first rays of the dawning day were gilding the belvedere of the Virginia when Sir Edward drew up before the southern moat. Nizam hastened, at the first tramp of the approaching troop, to lower the draw-bridge and assist Sir Edward and his small escort to defile into the spacious grounds, scanning the faces of the blacks, as they passed, to assure himself that they were all friends.

"Any news?" asked Sir Edward of Nizam, as he leaped from his saddle.

"Yes and no," said the servant, with an imperious gesture dismissing the domestics of Sir Edward; "everybody is gloomy enough, except Captain Jonathan."

"Ah! the Captain is in good humor, is he? He has, however, little reason, this time, to find much satisfaction in the exchanges. . . . Nizam, you are an old resident here, did you not find that the transaction came off unsuccessfully?"

"One would be blind who did not see that, Sir Edward.

The Chinaman has, this time, deprived me of my opium and tobacco. Well! it is nothing to wonder at after all; we are not supplied with that for which there is the greatest demand."

"Ivory, you mean?"

"Yes, Sir Edward, ivory. . . . Everything else we possess in abundance; but I would rather have two tusks for that Chinaman, than a whole convoy of any other article. The fault, however, is not ours. For five years back, the elephants have become more wide awake. They are more clever than we, these animals. The death of Dai-Sée and of Jemidar did us an amount of harm in the neighborhood. Dai-Sée, the female, died of the spleen down yonder, upon the plantation. Jemidar, the male, was a superb animal, carrying a pair of tusks of a hundred and fifty pounds. He was as gentle as a dove; every afternoon, he would go bathing with Elmina, in the little lake at Honning-Clip; raising her by the waist of her bathing-dress, he would gently place her upon his back. From there, as from the top of a high rock, Elmina would plunge back into the lake; where the merry laugh of the pretty girl could be heard at two hundred paces from the lake by our men, every one of whom, rifle in hand, was keeping a sharp look out upon the edge of the wood.

"After the bath, Jemidar, with Elmina gracefully seated upon his back, would return to the park surrounding the house, preceded by Duke and Elphy; who found it rare frolic to sport with the monster's trunk. It was, indeed, a charming sight, and one which recalled the *bas-relief* of the temple of Visouakarma where the goddess Indrani is *represented seated* upon Iralvalte, her favorite elephant.

Jemidar, however, after the death of Dai-Sée, became inconsolable. The voice of Elmina even, whose tones are potent with charms for lion or savage, was unable to dissipate his melancholy. Finally, one day, after his bath, he gently set Elmina to one side, and then, with the speed of a horse plunged forward into the forest.

"We saw him no more but at a distance, over there, to the north, near the base of the Red Mountain, traveling alone, with the heavy pace of a dying elephant in quest of the cemetery of his fathers, among whom he sought to lay his bones. From the balcony of the belvedere, Elmina called aloud and waved those brilliant colors which, on former occasions, he was ready to recognize even at a distance. But all in vain: Jemidar remained deaf to her invitations. He is gone from us to die among his own great people. Never speak of Jemidar when Elmina is present, for the very mention of this friend of her youth makes her weep like a child."

"Do not suffer yourself to be so disturbed, Nizam. Your anecdote has, I must admit, much in it that is very amusing, but where is its connection with the exchanges of which we were speaking?"

"Ah! my dear Sir Edward, there is every connection in the world: animals are surrounded by mysteries which we will ever be at a loss to explain. Years ago, that great naturalist, Captain Jonathan's brother, remarked that, since the foundation of the colony of the Virginia, in this neighborhood, the manners and habits of the elephants, within the forest of Sitsikamma, had undergone a change. And now, the escape and probable death of our Jemidar has caused those herds to migrate from the lake which bears

their name and at which, from the earliest days of this world's existence, they were wont to refresh their bodies and slake their thirst.

"As late as last year, Willy and myself, with five or six Makidas, enjoyed no little success in game of this kind. I, alone, captured as many as three pairs of tusks. Now, with our traps and our rifles, we rarely capture anything. Chance has to intervene by driving apart into our neighborhood four or five of the duller sort of elephants; for as among men, there are not a few elephants whose good sense is none of the best, and it is upon these that we usually count. However, Sir Edward, a few days will enable you to form your own estimate in this matter. We are, shortly, to engage in one of these elephant hunts, and you are too much of the gentleman to loiter here, while we are upon the chase."

"Why! sir, that I may not fail at your *rendez-vous*, I will be awake and about this very evening. . . . Is Miss Elmina to be one of the party?"

"Pshaw! Sir Edward, you cannot actually mean what you say. You, evidently, never hunted elephants. At Chandernagor or Calcutta the creole women, I am aware, do take part in these great sports; but your elephant hunts, within the English colonies, are child's play, or pleasant strolls over plains, upon which the tiger and the panther die of fear beneath the very shadow of a rifle, or plead for mercy at the hands of the hunter. You will see another sight, here. On our expeditions it is a common thing to give battle to monsters who are desperate to that degree in defense of their virgin tracts, that they will resist to the *death* the most formidable invasion that threatens their

ancient homes. What! Sir Edward! Elmina, that treasure of grace and loveliness, giving chase to a herd of elephants!"

"Restrain your emotions, Nizam; I am altogether of your mind, in that regard. I am very sensible of your great devotion to Elmina, and it is, indeed, a source of very great pleasure to me."

"I hear a cooing in the dovecote, Sir Edward; Miss Elmina is up; she will shortly cross the terrace; the whole house is yet buried in sleep. I would not have my young mistress surprise me here playing the sloth; I must be off to the farm and the bee-hives."

At this moment, Elmina, like the radiance of another sun, appeared upon the perron of the Virginia.

She was dressed in the simplest of calico prints, the modesty of which was enhanced by a sash of iris ribbon and an elegant pearl clasp *en rosace*. Her hat of rice straw, with its large heavy borders, was so arranged that it disclosed on either side rich clusters of curls, whose glossy lustre lent to its simplicity a brightness which seldom adorns a golden crown."

"Nizam! Nizam!" she said, raising her sweet voice to a call, "do you hear? . . . Come here!"

Nizam, who, on leaving Sir Edward, was hastening in the direction of the fields, returned forthwith, and with head uncovered, approached the stair-case to receive the young girl's orders.

"Nizam," she said, "I am so displeased with Neptunio; he did not give Duke anything to drink, yesterday evening; the poor dear lion has been complaining all night; I heard him."

"Will Miss Elmina allow me to beg her to remember that Neptunio had received no orders to water Duke," replied Nizam, bowing gently. "Neptunio never does anything of his own choosing, and unless we tell him to do a thing, he will not do it."

Elmina drew her little white hand across her forehead, as if recalling something she had forgotten, and said with a bewitching simplicity in her smile:

"He is right; Neptunio, he is right. . . . I forgot to tell him. . . . I was disturbed . . . yesterday evening. . . . I don't know why. . . . Nizam, bring me my Duke."

Just then, Sir Edward appeared at the opposite side to present his respects to Captain Jonathan's niece; at the sound of his footsteps, Elmina raised the brim of her hat with her hand, and with a somewhat more serious composure in her features, returned his salutations.

"Sir Edward," she said, "see what an honor I am doing your pretty bracelets! I intend to wear them for the next fifteen days to thank you the more for them."

"They're a trifle. . . ."

"Oh! more than that, I hope, Sir Edward; they're a souvenir."

"There is much merit, indeed, in not forgetting you after a single day's absence!"

"Oh! tell me something about the queen of the Maki-das, Sir Edward; they say you have borne yourself right gallantly towards her. Perhaps this good queen never suspected that she was black, and what did you do but take it upon yourself to present her with a London mirror. What a very delicate attention!"

"Miss Elmina, you overwhelm me! you are taking ad-

vantage of my position and of your own ; I have just passed a night on horseback, and I see by the tranquil freshness of your complexion, that you were not upon the same tramp that I was. That is not generous, Miss Elmina."

"Very well then ! I'll wait until you have recovered from your fatigues before I talk to you about the queen of the Makidas. . . . Here is Duke, coming to wish me good morning."

Elmina ran down the flight of steps, and seated herself upon a low rustic bench of naucleas twigs, sheltered from the ardent rays of the rising sun by a broad cupola of flowering acacias.

By an easy movement of his neck, Duke freed himself from Nizam and his chain, and ran towards his mistress with side-long bounds and a sportive tossing of his head which caused the brilliant rays from his yellow mane to mingle their brightness with the morning sunbeams. When within two paces of Elmina, he stopped short, at the bottom of the tall grass, like a dog *en arrêt*, extending his paws one after the other and then drawing them in again. His eyes were closed, his tail stiffened, his muzzle outstretched, while his whole body quivered with the convulsive and abrupt movement of the boa. At a fillip from Elmina, that sounded like the click of two ivory balls, he approached, rubbing her dress with the whole length of his mane and supple, velvety flank.

"My poor Duke," said Elmina in a monologue of questions with silent answers, "my handsome Duke, they forgot you yesterday evening ; your mistress didn't think of you ; let us make friends again ; give me your paw ; that's right ! You are a sensible, good fellow. Now, give this gentle-

man your paw; firstrate, Duke. Were you at the lake, this morning, with Elphy? Has Elphy been good to you? You did not quarrel during your bath, did you? I am going to ask Neptunio. . . . See, how pretty you look with my straw hat . . . . come, Duke . . . . come nearer . . . . nearer yet . . . . let me tie the ribbon under your chin. . . . There now you are really handsome. . . . You look like an old lady whose portrait I have in my room. . . . Sir Edward, have you ever seen a dog more obedient than this noble lion?"

"But, who would not obey you, Miss Elmina? even did he hold a higher place than Duke, which, I think, is not possible."

"How old would you say Duke is, Sir Edward?"

Still wearing Elmina's hat, the lion threw himself upon the grass, in the pose of a sphinx. The young girl continued her pretty prattle, addressing, with a perfect charm in her childishness, sometimes Sir Edward, sometimes Duke, whom she teased with her dainty little hands.

"Miss Elmina," said Sir Edward, "your lion much resembles a certain colonel of the Coldstream Guards, an old man of sixty-six."

"Hush, Sir Edward, my Duke is a young man; he is only five years old. When he was but a little thing, Willy brought him from the Red Mountains. . . . And how old are you, Sir Edward?"

"I am as old as a lady of twenty."

"Duke! don't take off my hat with your big paw. . . . You were never married, were you, Sir Edward?"

"I never yet met a Miss Elmina in the whole world: I *was, therefore, constrained to remain single.*"

At this compliment, the first which the innocent and pretty creole had ever received, and which was discharged right into her face with a superb gallantry, Elmina drew herself up to her full height, fixing her large blue eyes upon the countenance of Sir Edward.

In this conflict between the primitive young girl and this man of culture *par excellence*, she had no other resource to which to appeal but that wonderful instinct which, without distinction, is common to her sex, of every color and climate. Armed with this, as with a weapon which nature put into her hand, she feared nothing, when the first violence of her emotion had subsided.

Notwithstanding his tact and his experience, Sir Edward put a wrong interpretation upon this emotion. When he saw the crimson flush that mounted to her cheek and tinged the pure white of her graceful neck, he committed that error into which self-love not unusually betrays those whose misfortune it is to be similarly situated. It appeared to him that the young creole was actually in love with him, or was fast becoming enamored of his perfections. An instant served to rehearse the many recollections which were gathered about Elmina, from the eve of his hospitable reception, when Jonathan's niece, with an artless grace, tendered him the warmest welcome, up to their present meeting, beneath the maiden mildness of the rising sun. A phenomenon of rare occurrence, in the life of man, then took place in the case of Sir Edward. Confronting a young woman with the coolest possible purpose of giving nothing that might transpire an earnest thought, not even a proposal of marriage, if chance would lead to such a thing, he felt the very depths of his soul

disturbed, at the consciousness that upon him this artless creature of a new world had centered all her thoughts for the future.

At that moment, the vast magazine of bitter raillery from which he was wont to gather his keenest sarcasms on matrimony was destroyed, to give place to a treasure of sentiment in which he found every charm, and upon which he dwelt with the utmost gravity.

He understood that this issue of an acquaintance and friendship, which placed the hand of Elmina within his own, was, indeed, a sweet sacrifice, and that after a life of wandering and a career in which he had encountered many a foe, there was perhaps one corner of this earth, redolent with the perfume of flowers and alive with the murmur of fountains, which happiness had reserved for him.

Had their conversation been allowed to proceed further, the form and meaning of Sir Edward's remarks would have borne witness to the sudden revolution which he had just experienced. The arrival, however, of Captain Jonathan upon the scene interrupted their dialogue.

The law of chance is such, that when two are engaged in private conference, a third party is sure to join them just at the moment which is most inopportune.

Sir Edward stepped forward to offer his hand to Jonathan and to communicate the latest information respecting his sojourn at the bay of Agoa. Elmina hurriedly took her hat from Duke, and presented her forehead to the tender caresses of the old gentleman. Rita appeared upon the balcony of the kiosk, and was saluted like a queen at her levee. Willy followed his uncle upon the terrace. *Lorédan alone was missing.*

The frugal morning repast was served beneath the shade of the trees, and when the whole household was gathered at the breakfast table, the absence of Lorédan was the more remarked.

"Miss Rita," said Jonathan, presenting the young creole a boabab blossom, "I don't see your brother; perhaps he is indisposed this morning?"

"I hardly think so, Captain Jonathan," Rita rejoined with an expression of little concern in her answer.

"Yesterday, your brother was very sad," said Jonathan; "the fact is, my children, you have all been sad since Sir Edward left us; and, in truth, I must admit that it was with impatience that I, myself, have been expecting my clever chess player. . . . By the way, Sir Edward, have you been able to recall that famous problem of M. de La Bourdonnais?"

"I have, Captain Jonathan; I played it with your Chinaman, aboard his own vessel. . . . This absence of Lorédan begins to cause me uneasiness. . . . Neptunio just tells me that he is not in his room. . . ."

Sir Edward felt the pressure of Elmina's hand upon his own; he looked at the young girl: she was very pale. Attributing her emotion to the interest which she felt for himself, in this moment of anxiety, he expressed his thanks for her concern in a look full of tenderness, which Elmina failed to understand.

They had just risen from the table, when Lorédan made his appearance upon the outer bank of the northern moat, waving a salute to the people of the Virginia.

"Monsieur de Gessin," Jonathan addressed him, "in my capacity of commandant of this fortress, I order you

under arrest. You have left the fort, and without my permission."

Lorédan, handing his rifle to a domestic, shook hands with Jonathan, Edward and Rita.

"Your charge is perfectly just, Captain Jonathan," said he; "I am at fault; I have trespassed against the laws of the place, by passing the night in the enemy's country."

"What imprudence!" said Jonathan; "consider, young man, what you have done, look upon these young ladies; your sister there, and my niece, have lost the fresh color of their cheeks; they have turned pale at the thought of the dangers to which you have exposed yourself. For you to have ventured into those northern solitudes! Why that is a feat for a Frenchman with an American lining! If you repeat this misdemeanor, Monsieur de Gessin, I will arraign you before a court-martial."

"Captain Jonathan, will you allow me to palliate my conduct with an excuse?"

"Nothing more willingly—let us hear your defense."

"To-morrow, our hunting party will enter these northern solitudes. The expedition, they tell me, is one of danger. Now, your hunters are all tried men; his brilliant record in the Indian service, proves Sir Edward also to be inured to this warfare against savage beasts. There is but one raw recruit; myself. I was desirous, therefore, of serving my apprenticeship at this mode of warfare, without compromising any safety but my own.

"Courage in darkness is a rare thing. It is then that the nerves seem arrayed against the heart. AJAX trembled in the dark, and he warred with men!—a child's *play*! Now, I reasoned with myself, if I can hold my own

by star-light, I will answer for my part, beneath the broad sunbeam. It was, Captain Jonathan, a simple trial of my nervous system, and nothing more.

"If, with our little band of hunters, I were thoughtlessly to expose myself to any risks, and if, at a critical moment, I were, by some involuntary mistake, to compromise the entire party, in what light would you look upon my conduct? The following day, I would be obliged to get out my own death warrant and play my own executioner."

"Well and good, Monsieur de Gessin," replied Jonathan; "there is not a little good sense in what you say. But, now, will you let us know what is the outcome of your experience?"

"I am quite satisfied with myself, Captain Jonathan. Between the hero and the poltroon there is many an honorable grade, and the one I occupy will not make me blush."

"Did your march lead you far into the enemy's territory?"

"I traveled, I should think, about twelve miles, but I followed the mountain path, as Nizam had recommended me."

"Had you traversed the lowlands, you would never have returned. . . . Did you see anything around you or at a distance?"

"My eye and ear are unused to the visions and the sounds of the night. I did see frightful forms moving about me in the darkness, far above the goat trail along which I was following; and I could catch the sound of a dull roaring in the region of the cataract; but I am unable to

indicate, with the precision of an official report, to what created species these forms and sounds appertain: they were horrible to look at and dreadful to hear; and, with this, you have all that I will venture to affirm."

Jonathan, who was, all this while, speaking to Lorédan at some little distance from the others, now drew him further apart and said to him:

"Monsieur de Gessin, I was really pained to notice how coldly your sister, Rita, received you, just a moment ago, on your arrival from this adventure in the north. To witness the kind joy of Elmina, and the indifferent tranquillity of Rita, would lead one to believe that my niece was your sister, and your sister my niece. . . ."

"Well, the reason . . . . you see, Captain Jonathan," said Lorédan with a so evident an embarrassment, in even his appearance, that Sir Edward, whose penetration detected a difficulty in his position, walked over to the speakers with a view of coming to the rescue of his friend. . . . "The reason is that my sister Rita has not been, for some time back, what she used to be. . . . Formerly, she was of the gayest temperament, giddy even, and with a disposition as open as a child's. That shipwreck has painfully affected her. . . . An event so full of terrors not unfrequently changes the entire character of a young girl . . . and often . . . ."

Sir Edward here stepped up to Jonathen and said to him:

"Captain Jonathan, I am going to war to-morrow, and it would vex me to depart before I had shown you M. de La Bourdonnais' famous problem. It is hard to conjecture what may be the issue of war. . . . I am, therefore, at *your good pleasure*, Captain."

"I don't wish to hurry you, Sir Edward. . . . It is becoming very warm, even in the shade, here. Let us go inside; I will precede you, to prepare the chess-board."

Sir Edward followed him a step or two, and then returned to Lorédan to exchange a few hurried words.

"You found yourself quite embarrassed, did you not, Lorédan?"

"Ah! in passing Rita off for my sister, we made a great blunder! For once, at least, Sir Edward, you missed it!"

"And yet the idea was a good one. . . . Did you, after that dismal shipwreck, wish to expose yourself to the probability of having the door closed against you by some Methodist or Puritan, many of whom are to be found among these African colonists, and who would not hesitate to accuse you of the abduction of a minor, of clandestine marriage or of some other crime of the like nature? Presenting Rita as your sister, we incur no such imputation. I am indebted to the patriarch Abraham for this thought; in their travels, Sarah passed for his sister. And, if we have committed a blunder, the error is now irreparable; we cannot, you know, give ourselves the lie. Let Rita be your sister while we dwell with the Jonathans."

"That, doubtless, she must be. It is not that, however, which disquiets me; my constant source of uneasiness is the incomprehensible conduct of Rita herself, who overwhelms me with her respectful and comfortless gratitude. I am at my wit's end with conjectures; I have gone so far, indeed, as to suspect that she longed for her unknown spouse at Cape-Town; yet, while the Chinaman was lying at anchor in the bay of Agoa, when I proposed, with an

extreme of delicacy, to negotiate her passage to the Cape, she appeared to manifest little concern in the proposal, for she answered :

“God has conducted me to this place; and I will remain where Providence has deigned to provide me a shelter. . . . I am quite contented here. . . .”

Sir Edward was unable to conceal the emotion of pity that contracted his features. He bluntly interrupted his friend by saying :

“Jonathan is waiting for me; we will talk over this matter again to-morrow, on the hunt.”

Passing the terrace to reach the perron, Sir Edward continued in a whisper to Lorédan :

“My love making is in a very fair way. I am too well read in man to be a great student of woman; but, if I mistake not, Elmina is about to make me her choice. This evening, I am going to lose three games of chess with Jonathan, and then, I will venture upon my marriage suit. Lorédan, pity me, I am in love.

Elmina, whom the game or some more serious interest drew to the great hall of the mansion, dismissed Duke and withdrew, leaving Rita and Willy alone upon the terrace, at about two hundred steps from the house. The young girl was seated, with graceful ease, beneath the shade of a palmister, her head thrown back and pillowed upon a cluster of leaves; never did a prettier tree bear a handsomer fruit. Young Willy, who was about two steps from her, looked at her with eyes which needed no lips to speak their meaning.

The terrace was deserted. When a rapid glance assured *her that* Willy alone was within hearing, Rita addressed

him with that feigned calm with which women are well able to veil the agitation of their feelings:

"You are about to engage in a chase which is full of danger, Mr. Jonathan. I trust, however, that you will be very prudent, for I know that you are courageous."

"Miss Rita, this hunt will be an amusement; I have engaged in it twenty times with a real passion. The preparation ordinarily occupies eight days, for there is much to be done before we can set out. This time, every thing has been neglected. My uncle regarded me with some severity this morning. The fault, however, is not mine. I made every endeavor to avoid my uncle's displeasure; there is a will stronger than mine which binds my arms.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Rita; it may be that what I say will displease you. I am a child of the wilderness; I know but that which nature taught me. If I give you offense, place your hand upon my mouth, and I will hush; make me a sign, and I will leave you. Yes, and I would be happy in my obedience, even in that which would kill me with grief.

"I love the lakes and the torrents of my childhood; I love the graceful trees that shade the white hairs of my uncle; I love the hillocks where the bees gather golden treasure; I love the desert where God speaks to the lion; I love my sister Elmina, the only treasure which my mother left me. And yet, all that I love is no longer able to satisfy me. I am overcome with shame when I question myself, for I feel that there is a name, a face, a voice which I love above all these, and for which, were it required, I would sacrifice everything.

"To-morrow—such are the orders of my uncle—to-mor-

row I leave this house so full of my life; to-morrow I separate my soul from my body. In my absence, there will be none here to speak to you of me; to-morrow, at your evening watch upon the kiosk, my bouquet of flowers, thrown by my own hand, will not perfume the rich folds of your dress. I will be far away, on the mountain, upon the other horizon, watching each rising star to find that one upon which, for an instant, you will deign to fix your look."

With a chaste interior joy, which it was difficult to detect, upon a countenance veiled in sadness, Rita listened to every word of Willy's address. In like instances, it is not unfrequent that silence itself is an answer full of meaning. The young girl, in further refraining from an answer, would then have seemed to indicate to Willy that he might interpret her conduct favorably. She decided, therefore, to reply not, indeed, as her heart prompted, but as delicacy and her duty dictated.

"Mr. Jonathan," said she, rising and making a step in the direction of the Virginia, "you are so respectful and kind to me, that I dared not take it upon myself to interrupt you, when you addressed me alone; but I would hold myself a traitor to the feeling of affection with which you honor me, did I hesitate longer to enlighten you, as far as in me lies, upon my position and upon your own. Mr. Jonathan, do not think of me . . . do not think of me . . . I do not belong to myself. . . I have resigned myself to the will of another . . . pity a poor young orphan without support, who must offer herself a sacrifice to duty."

Overcome by this emotion, Willy made a step towards the young girl; but she placed her hand upon his lips, as *if to bid him be silent*; then, with the swiftness of a young

gazelle, she bounded off to join the company, in the great hall of the Virginia.

"She does not belong to herself! she must submit to the will of another!" the young civilized savage repeated twenty times to himself, as he stood there, twisting his fingers into one another. . . . "Oh! there is, then, a man between her and my love. . . . A man!"

And Willy broke off one of the leaves which, a moment before, was entangled in Rita's hair, and tore it convulsively. The lamb was changed into a lion.

He trembled, as if a polar chill had seized him beneath the tropics.

"Yes," he added in a mental monologue, "when, a day or so ago, the Chinaman was lying at anchor in the bay and a passage to her destination was offered, she said to my uncle: *I must remain here!* It is here, then, that *other* is. . . . Here, I know of nobody but her brother and Sir Edward. . . . All right!"

Beneath his dark curls the blue eyes of Willy flashed fire, and his pale nervous complexion was suffused with a warm flush. A cry, as from some savage source within his breast burst forth, like an echo from a distant cave; the muscles of his naked neck were contracted, while the blood, receding from his lips, left upon them the livid hue of agony and death.

He started, as he caught the sound of a firm and measured step approaching him. Nizam had come to join him.

"Master," said he, "your servants are awaiting your last orders. The scouts, who are now ready to start, have not yet been informed where to bivouac for the night."

"I will join them shortly," said Willy, without looking at Nizam.

The young man had just taken a determination; the terrific storm that raged within his breast and within his soul appeared to have subsided into the form of an energetic thought. He crossed the terrace with a tranquil step and a serene expression of countenance, that no disturbance of his features might alarm his family and domestics.

The rest of the day was consumed by both masters and servants in preparation for the grand chase on the morrow.



## CHAPTER XI

## THE DEPARTURE OF THE HUNTERS.

IN the eastern sky, the bright lustre of the stars was fast fading away into the pale colors of the tropical twilight. In the misty transparence of the morning hours, the tops of the tall forest trees, together with the crests of the distant mountains, stood out in clearly marked outlines. The air around had imperceptibly set aside that mysterious terror which accompanies the gloomy hours of the night. Distant sounds grew feeble, while they traversed solitudes now alive with the universal concert of a thousand aerial warblers hastening forth to greet the rising sun. In the grass and beneath the foliage of the forest, the light rustle of the flowers and fruits, together with the hum of tiny birds, broke upon the ear. Dead or alive, everything awoke to drink in the first rays of the balmy morning. Fifteen hunters crossed the moat in the direction of the solitudes of the north, at the same moment that Jonathan, to greet the morning of this glorious day, un-

furled the American flag from the top of the belvedere surmounting the Virginia.

Nizam, at the side of Willy, lead the march ; close behind these, followed Sir Edward and Lorédan. The rear was drawn up by a number of young Makidas, chosen from among the most active, hardy and intelligent of their tribe.

Willy, Lorédan and Sir Edward were attired in the light white costume of the officers in command of the Sepoy garrisons of India. Nizam and the savages, as to costume, were little removed from the condition of the primitive man. All were armed with a rifle and a brace of pistols ; while their bronzed, black or pale features, manifested to an equal degree that energy of soul and strength of body, together with all those other noble, manly virtues which speak the same language to the eyes of every nation.

At a short distance from the Virginia, beyond the northern moat, lies the region of the unknown. Natural quincunxes of strange trees and tall plants which cover extensive salt mines give indications of a new world.

Here are gigantic dragon trees and boababs with their enormous trunks, intertwining their huge limbs, while the topmost boughs, hanging down in sombre arches to the ground, range around, like the natural peristyle of some mysterious African temple. We have not here the dank and marshy fruitfulness of the American soil, nor the soft, caressing moisture of the Asiatic ; but the wild luxuriance of a lusty verdure coupled to the rugged grandeur of barrenness. We feel that here lies the course of the world's great artery ; we understand that, within the

bowels of these mountains, the sun has not stored gold and diamonds, but that from the dark womb of these rock-crowned hills, beings of a superhuman structure issue forth, whose terror-striking shapes match the gigantic shades that cover them, the wild cataracts at which they slake their fiery thirst, and the dark caverns within which they are nourished.

It was not long before the little caravan emerged from the night gloom. From tree to tree, as far even as the distant horizon, darkness, like a veil drawn aside by some invisible hand, fast vanished before them.

The shade, beneath the arching forest foliage, began ere long to assume its thousand fantastic shapes and figures, and, as if nature had invited her children to their morning meal, the young savages darted up into the boababs, to gather the fruit which, in the early rays of the rising sun, was opening out amid its rich protection of blossoms. A moment later all vegetation ceased, and the hunters found themselves scaling the Red Mountain by naked, desolate and tortuous paths. Gaining the summit, the entire party saluted the belvedere of the Virginia, as it stood up before them, in the glare of the morning sunshine. It rose high over the tallest trees, and the American banner waving from its summit, its spangled blue like a star-lit sky, resembled the ensign of some vessel astrand upon an ocean of verdure and flowers.

With a gaze uninterrupted by a single word, Sir Edward and Lorédan fixed their eyes on the distant object. The imperious tones of Willy, ordering them to resume the march, which had been, for a moment, interrupted, put an end to their reverie. Descending the mountain side, they were again enveloped in the darkness of solitude.

Along this new route, the eye of the hunter, at every turn, discovered upon the trunks of trees and upon their branching roots, traces of a people who had fled before the approach of man. Deep notches in the trees told plainly, that, formerly, before the advent of the American planter, steely claws and teeth of hard ivory had been whetted upon their barks.

At intervals, the eye was lost along those gloomy corridors of green, tunneled through a dense mass of under-wood, wide enough for an elephant, and of a symmetry which, in the darkness of the wilderness, was simply startling. It was like following the bore of a miner through a ledge of black granite. These passages had been drilled into the forest verdure, by monsters of shapeless flesh, in their furious flight, with trunk aloft, before the scent of a foe which they dread, as small game does the near approach of a troop of lions.

Often the beauty with which some of the wildest creations of nature are surrounded sheds a divine charm about these pictures of terror: from a soil, ploughed by the angry claws of savage brutes; from the foot of aged trunks, as hollow as hill-side caverns, the eye of the hunter mounts aloft until it rests upon leafy bowers, garlands of fruits and clustering branches, nature's vineyards, waving from tree to tree and alive with a people of birds and a world of flowers. The solemn loneliness of land or sea counsels quiet and meditation. Sir Edward himself, overwhelmed by the majestic spectacle of interior Africa, did not exchange a word with his friend until mid-day, when the party halted for an hour or two, at the command of *hunger and fatigue*.

The conversation was carried on in a low voice, like the whisperings of two sentinels near the enemy's lines.

"We are in the strangest of lands," said Sir Edward to Lorédan. "You have about you trees twenty times a century old; here is the trail of the lion, the den of the elephant, a nature full, at once, of charms and terrors, a picture which seizes upon the soul, forbidding a moment's excursion into thoughts foreign to its own great loveliness. But, I am confident, my friend, that there is in your soul something overruling this grand spectacle; an atom which absorbs lions and elephants. Lorédan, tell me the name of this atom?"

"Love."

"Good, Lorédan. I am delighted to have read your thoughts. The book of experience always lacks a chapter: Antichrist will write the last one. I am myself exactly in your condition. In vain have I cast my eyes about me upon this fruitful and selfish land, the name of a woman seems to be written everywhere, and everywhere it blots out the grandeur of this creation."

"Edward, from sunset, I have been walking on at random and saw nothing under the sky. If our game is started, let me know it, I will, then, open my eyes. If you had not spoken to me, I would have continued to hold silent converse with myself until I had heard the first report."

"When you are not in love, Lorédan, you are not a bad observer; have you remarked Willy's expression of late?"

"It seems to me that he wears his every day look; I have never known him very talkative or gay. He is, I

think, not unlike his native land, very handsome, but like that same land there is something sad about him."

"Did you notice, a little while ago, on the Red Mountain, with what an angry accent he cried, *Forward?*"

"I did not, Edward."

"Very good! you did not remark anything . . . it is not love that is blindfolded, but the lover."

"Do you think, Edward, that he does not share the affection which his uncle cherishes for you? . . . That may possibly be. . ."

"Everything is possible, Lorédan, especially that which is not."

"But, my dear Edward, if you understand this better than I do, why leave me a prey to my conjectures? If you see a bandage over my eyes, remove it."

Sir Edward reflected a moment or so, and then, with a slight tinge of friendly emotion in his voice, replied:

"Lorédan, if you will cease for a moment to be a lover and listen like a man, to what I shall tell you, I will, forthwith, remove the bandage that obscures your vision."

By a sign, Lorédan expressed as much as if he said:

"Speak, I am ready to hear anything."

"Lorédan, I have been waiting for this moment; it is a propitious one. We are, here, in the land of dreams, treading the soil of another planet; every rise and every slope about us is a marvel. Here, then, nothing should cause us surprise. In an atmosphere in which we are surrounded by the unlikely, everything should strike us as natural; and we should listen calmly and without thoughts of despair, hearken to everything we hear beneath a sunny *clime*, where the life of one man is the life of all, as you

remarked yourself so well to Jonathan, yesterday, in defense of your imprudent night adventure. Do you remember?"

"Well! love has not rendered me forgetful of what took place so late as yesterday evening. I do remember what I said. But are you going to apprise me, in this place, of the death of my father? . . . go on, then. I'll give scope to my despair to-morrow; to-day, I will do my duty."

Sir Edward slung his rifle over his shoulders, taking Lorédan's arm, that his conversation might be closer and their confidence more intimate and solemn. Twenty paces in advance of them, were Nizam and Willy who, from sundown, had been pushing forward at the top of their speed. Suddenly they stopped short, while their excited gestures indicated their very great anxiety. The little party halted an instant in the rear of their hardy leaders, as if fixed to the spot. Sir Edward grasped his rifle with both hands; and, at the same moment, the left arm of every man in the troop was seen to lengthen out beneath the barrel of his piece, while the trigger trembled beneath his finger.

Save the rustling of the leaves and the cooing of the grey turtle doves perched by the thousand upon the heather bushes along the border of a neighboring lake, nothing disturbed the deep silence of the forest.

They had just reached the edge of a woodland of giant laurels.

North and south, a vast horizon opened out before them. The ground, which hitherto had been covered with an endless carpet of soft grass, was spread over with a vast sheet of sand which glistened like grains of pulverized *alabaster*.

waters no sound disturbed the silence. The  
whir of the sparrow-hawk.

Leaning his rifle against a lofty tree, he watched the agility of a mandrill and the vigorous leaps of a leopard, from branch to branch, until he reached the most limbed. When, from this high perch, he cast his eye around over the whole scene, he dropped to Willy below this scene  
—Nothing.

About this scene there was no sound and Sir Edward. They, however, refrained from manifesting their surprise or action.

Nizam then came down, and the other hunters, who, prior to trusting to him, held a sort of council of war.

"How do you explain this?" said Sir Edward.

"The reason is this, Master. Nizam, as a rule halts here. On the present occasion, not having received your orders, he

to our chief of scouts . . . . but later . . . . unless my memory plays me false . . . . I said to Neptunio: wait for us at the Sparrow-hawk Lake."

"Master, permit me to say that Neptunio has the ear of a cat, and if you said anything to him he understood just that, no more, no less."

"Since, then, Nizam, you know how to enter so fully into Neptunio's ideas, in what direction must we now turn, do you think, to overtake him?"

"Upon these wastes of sand there is not a single vestige of man's foot; now, I hold it for a certainty that our scouts took the route that lies, yonder, by the lake, for I can see that the raspberry bushes have lost as much of their fruit, as would suffice for the breakfast of these savages; but the mid-day wind has effaced their foot-prints upon the sand. It is very possible that having for a time followed the left bank of the lake, they wound around towards the right to continue their march under cover of the woodland. My advice, accordingly, would be to split up our party into two divisions and to move northward, along either shore of the lake. At the northern extremity, within the forest of mimosas, both divisions will form a junction."

Willy nodded his approval and then said:

"My brave Nizam, from this moment, happen what will, I name you leader of the chase; all its manœuvres will be as you direct; and to your obedience every member of the expedition will submit. This is the last order which I will give you. Now, let us have your commands."

Nizam fixed upon Willy a pair of piercing black eyes, which seemed eager to read the thoughts concealed within the depths of his young master's mind.

The young American savage, however, stood up firmly under the beam of searching rays and suffered no interpretation of his thoughts to escape him. He, then, picked out six hunters, and, with a gesture of equivocal politeness, beckoning Sir Edward to follow him, he directed his steps towards the wooded margin of the lake.

Nizam, Lorédan and the rest of the party started for the opposite shore. Willy and Sir Edward, at twenty paces in advance, moved forward in front of their squad. The young American was lost in that silent meditation which seeks but some formula in which to express itself in words. Sir Edward, whom nothing within the grasp of human sagacity was able to escape, noticed with a sidelong and apparently wandering glance, that the expression on Willy's face was much disturbed. He, therefore, held himself in readiness for some unlooked-for scene, such as is often enacted on these Indian hunts, during which inexorable passions, under cover of amusement, fix some murderous meeting. Yet all Sir Edward's conjectures would not have enabled him to hit upon the frightful reality which, like a thunderbolt in an African storm, fell upon his astounded senses.

A shrill prelude, resembling the hissing of a snake, signified the utterance of some menacing expression through the compressed lips of the savage young Jonathan.

"Sir Edward," said he, "my father is a citizen of a republic; you are an English gentleman; we are both of us noble, and there is nothing, is there, which you will refuse me?"

*"I don't know yet, Master Willy, what is the nature of*

the request which you are going to make," said Sir Edward, while with admirable coolness, he slung his rifle back over his shoulders and folded his arms above his pistol-belt; "but I give you my word as a gentleman, that you will receive satisfaction from me."

"Sir Edward, beneath this sun and in the presence of these trees of God, I ask you to take this oath. I request you to swear that whatever, upon this chase, will be said or will happen between you and me, shall remain buried forever in the most profound secrecy."

"I will refuse the son of Jonathan nothing," said Sir Edward with simple dignity; "I will take that oath beneath this sun and in the presence of these trees of God!"

"Do you remember, Sir Edward, the night that Nizam sang upon the terrace in front of the house?"

"Yes, Master Willy, I do."

"Do you remember also the flattering expressions you addressed to Miss Rita?"

"I do."

"These words, Sir Edward, contained an allusion to the slavish condition of the Indian brahminess."

"That is possible, Master Willy."

"Miss Rita returned no other answer than a sorrowful silence. She got up, with tears in her eyes, and my sister Elmina followed her apart to afford her some little consolation, since not one, not even her brother, M. Lorédan de Gessin, deigned to approach her."

"Yes, Master Willy, that scene was quite mysterious, and I can recall it distinctly."

"It struck me also, Sir Edward; and opened my eyes, which I have not closed since. Sir Edward, I am no more

than an African savage, and I know not, whether what I am going to say or do is right in the eyes of civilized men; but I know that nature is a true counsellor, and her voice I propose to obey. . . . Sir Edward, there is a young girl in this wilderness who is suffering. You have promised a fortune. . . . I heard it, Sir Edward, I heard it! . . . . You have promised a fortune to M. de Gessin, the brother of this young girl! To further your interests, you entered into an agreement with the merchant who weighed anchor the other day in the bay of Agoa; I have learned all this from my faithful Makidas! It is, then, with these promises and these contrivances that you lord it over the brother, and trample, like a despot, upon his sister. Sir Edward, in my mind there is no further doubt upon this matter; you are a tyrant to the unfortunate Rita, and I am her protector! . . . . Therefore, either you or I must perish in this wilderness! There is one too many upon this hunt! I love what you love. Death must decide whose it shall be. My father has bequeathed to me the last drop of that blood he poured out upon the field of Brandywine, in mortal conflict with your father, and the young Yankee now, in his turn, declares war against John Bull!"

Sir Edward broke off a palm leaf which he inserted into the top of his straw hat, as if his first thought was to take precaution against the sun which, shortly, awaited him at his exit from the forest. These little details which were gone through with a foppishness unknown among savages, filled up the measure of Willy Jonathan's irritation.

"Master Willy," said Sir Edward with that gentleness in his looks and words which the inexperienced take for

fear; "my dear Master Willy, within my own secrets there are locked up the secrets of others: for the present, then, I cannot offer you any explanation. . . ."

"No explanation, Sir Edward! I am as thoroughly informed as you are, and I look upon every explanation as cowardice."

Sir Edward, extending his arms to their full length in the form of a cross, bowed his head slightly, as if to say: "So much the worse for you! I have done my duty, happen what will!" And resuming his ordinary tone of voice, he said:

"Well, Master Willy, let us hear how you propose to settle this matter? I, tyrant though I be, permit of explanations."

"You have, no doubt, seen affairs of this nature before, on the chase in either India, Sir Edward? We can dispense with seconds and confidants: the matter is a secret between you and me; in an occurrence of this kind, the name of the woman should never be mentioned. As we leave the wood, our party will scatter upon the plain and you and I, far in advance of the others, will go apart about a quarter rifle range. At the first discharge, then, it is agreed that you fire at me and that I shoot at you. Whoever falls will, then, be looked upon as the victim of an awkward aim. Is that clear?"

"Would to God that everything else were as clear! . . . I reserve a single right only, Master Willy, that of submitting to your first and even to your second fire; for to make me take this strange provocation in earnest, I must wait until your ball has whistled by my ears."

"Not another word Sir Edward, you are, you know, bound by the oath of a gentleman."

The parties met at the extremity of the lake, within a charming grove, fresh with a cooling shade and alive with living waters. Nizam ordered a halt, and the hunters scattered themselves around upon the grass which was to serve them for couch and festal board.

Willy and Nizam walked apart to exchange fears and hopes as to the fate of Neptunio and his scouts. Sir Edward met his friend with a joyful clasp of the hand, and soon was engaged in conversation, with that feigned frivolity which never abandoned him.

"These people ought to be very happy in this country; I made this remark a while ago."

"What people?" asked Lorédan, as he seated himself upon the grass with all the easy voluptuousness of a tired traveler.

"Why! my heavens, the elephants, lions, black monkeys, and in short all the inhabitants of these avenues and streets that wind around the hills and through the forest. We have just traversed a ravishing landscape: it is the Hyde-Park of paradise."

"By the way, Edward, at times, as I caught a glimpse of you and Willy from the opposite shore, I remarked a degree of agitation in your gestures. . . . What passed between you?"

"Between us two, Lorédan? . . . . Why, nothing . . . . absolutely nothing. . . . We were chatting about elephants. . . . Africa was on the *tapis* . . . . a vast subject! . . . . Willy is an excellent young fellow . . . . not over-communicative, as you know . . . . as sombre as a cave . . . . naturally good at bottom, however . . . . subject, it may be, to occasional *flashes of savagery*, which are otherwise quite excusable.

He is a negro whom chance has whitened. . . . *A propos*, let us not forget to regulate our chronometers; I don't want to put the sun in error."

"The fact is, Edward, that, at a distance, you looked like two men quarreling. It was this, precisely, that made me uneasy."

"We were declaiming verses on Africa . . . lines from one of our modern poets. . . . You are probably unacquainted with the passage, Lorédan? . . . it is very pretty in the original. I will repeat the lines for you; they fit in nicely with our surroundings. They are a portrait of the lion.

The lion is monarch of this vast domain,  
Where strong and free he treads the open plain;  
For him warm Afric's forest vastness grows,  
And sheds its freshness, perfume and repose.  
Around the mountain base God built his lone  
Familiar grot, and raised his mossy throne;  
The reed-crowned lake affords him crystal drink,  
And cooling baths along its shady brink.  
When hunger's pangs his craving flanks impel,  
He banquets on the starry-eyed gazelle;  
Its life, he drains; its quivering flesh he rends,  
And then, in sleep, his gorged length unbends.  
On him fierce revels leave no wasting trace,  
But bearded chief of his primeval race,  
He leads the young to join the savage play,  
Inures the older to the bloody fray,  
Then yields to death the glories of his reign,  
Not one white thread upon his golden mane.

"Permit me, my dear Lorédan," added Sir Edward, when he had finished these verses, "to pencil this portrait and send it to Elmina by the first mail that leaves this district,—the first savage on his way home."

Sir Edward placed his traveling desk upon his knees, and, for quite a while, wrote with such care and so great a composure, that Lorédan, at five steps from him, did not dare to interrupt him; entertaining no suspicion of the frightful drama planned between Willy and Sir Edward, upon the opposite shore of the lake.

When he had finished writing, Sir Edward took an easy horizontal position upon his grassy eider-down, and crossing his arms upon his breast, fell asleep. Lorédan approached him to question him further in respect to their mysterious confidence of the morning, but he respected the hunter's repose.



## CHAPTER XII

## THE HUNTERS AND THE ELEPHANT.

SIR EDWARD had now been sleeping for an hour, and Lorédan, a step or two from where the hunter was lying, anxiously awaited the end of his slumbers.

At quite a distance from the rest of the party, Nizam and Willy who had been, during the interval, engaged in close counsel, at length resolved upon a plan of operations; for they now communicated some order to a young savage who was as swift as the wind. He immediately put himself in readiness to set out for the Virginia. Lorédan thought it too ill-advised to rouse Sir Edward merely to apprise him of an opportunity to mail the poetic souvenir destined for Elmina. The sheet of paper upon which Sir Edward has drawn this portrait of the lion protrudes, by a large margin, above his hunting belt.

It would hardly be an indiscretion to take it; it would rather be the delicate attention of a friend who is unwilling to trouble a repose which, along these burning marches, is a refreshment much needed, indeed. Accord-

ingly, Lorédan, as gently as if he were culling a flower, removed the manuscript from Sir Edward's belt, and during the time that the light footed and savage messenger was gathering the commissions of his black friends, it occurred to him to peruse the verses before folding them in the form of a letter, as Sir Edward probably intended to do, and handing them to the postman.

His surprise perished upon his lips for sounds to express itself under the situation. He remained as silent and as immovable as a half reclining statue upon a tomb among the tall sedge of the *Campo-Santo*.

This would-be portrait of the lion was conceived as follows:

*To Loredan de Gessin,  
God knows where, 15th Jan., 187\*.*

"My dear friend, when you read this, I will be dead; let me, then, reason with you a little, and do not give yourself over to a stupid despair.

"It is idle to tell you how I came by my fate. Let it be enough for you to know that I no longer exist.

"I had begun a confidential talk with you, or, rather, I was about to make a revelation. As usual, we were interrupted at the right moment. This time, we cannot be interrupted; at least, I think we cannot. I will go on, then, to the end. Lorédan, if, in the world in which you are, truth could ever issue from any source, it would be from the mouth of a corpse. Believe me then, my friend.

"When a man's happiness is in his hands, he sets it upon the head of a woman. Success is paradise: failure, hell. Love is a crown of flowers or a carcanet of lava; *often, both the one and the other.*

"In perplexity, regret nothing. Think of your father, Lorédan.

"The purport of all this is that Rita does not love you, and never will. I swear to you that this is a truth, as evident as your noon-day sun.

"Arm yourself, my young friend, with all the strength and liberty of action at your command. You have a noble filial mission to fulfil. Forget passion, think of duty!

"Above all, let nothing appear upon your countenance; to the indifferent this would be the tell tale of an inward sorrow, with which they will trifle but which they will never console.

"Your aged father is waiting for you, my friend!

"Subjoined, you will find my last will, in the form of a testament; it constitutes you my heir; read it, and then affix to it the seal of my arms.

"This paper authorizes you to claim the estate of my late relation, Mrs. Kellet, deceased a year ago at Heksham, Northumberland. It is a little thing, but the *little* we give is worth more than the *much* we retain.

"Life is a series of farewells; we finally reach the last, and this last sad farewell I now give you.

EDWARD K."

Before Lorédan had perused this letter the black post-man was gone. He folded the page and very dexterously replaced it within Sir Edward's belt, without awaking him. The repose of the European hunter is a heavy swoon; that of the African sportsman is an image of death.

For an instant, the wild fever that raged in Lorédan's soul clouded his reason. Too many desolating thoughts

set upon him at once, and in the whirl of delirium, he lost his head. He was, in fact, morally decapitated. The letters traced by Sir Edward passed before his eyes in glittering array, like the waves of sparkling light which, at the last fatal moment, glare before the dazed vision of the dying culprit.

Reason, however, in a man of energy soon triumphs over anguish; there is, for him, a resurrection after death. Everything had vanished; yet, the crisis passed, Lorédan again beheld each object by which he was surrounded, but darkened now, as with a funereal hue. His companions were too deeply occupied with their own feelings and dangers to remark the sudden agony, through which the young white hunter had just passed.

As to Sir Edward, he was still at his length upon the grass. His face was beaming with that quiet happiness which the morning dawn lends to a healthy mind and robust body, at rest in a luxurious alcove, hung with ample folds of Irish poplin.

Willy's forward sounded throughout the thicket of mimosas, bringing the band of hunters to their feet. To traverse the wood in which they then were and reach the plain before sunset, they had to travel six miles.

Sir Edward readjusted his dress, examined the priming of his arms, and, side by side with Lorédan, resumed the line of march.

"I am delighted," he said to his friend, "that Willy's lion like cry aroused me. I was fairly tormented by a dream which, for me, was a sad one. Imagine me at home in Manchester, trudging down the steepes of *Hay-Market street*, on my way to that shabby rotunda they call the *Exchange*.

"I was with my uncle, Sir Edmund, who, by the way, died and was devoured five years ago. The object of our tramp was the establishment, under my management, of a manufactory of silk embroidery. You can understand the fever such a night-mare caused me.

"It was raining as it ever does at Manchester. The sun is never very conspicuous there, except for his absence. I was feeling my way through a wet and dense fog, or, not to misrepresent things, I was swimming on foot. At every step, I lifted aside the English sky that was beating against my forehead. Coursing on in advance of me, I beheld Elmina on a cashmere cloud, bordered with sunlight. I dashed forward to overtake her, but my foot slipped upon the slimy threshold of a vast elephant-shaped factory, with a moving trunk one hundred feet high for a chimney. The factory opened its abyss of a mouth and cried: 'forward!' I forthwith awoke. Willy has a voice like a *tam-tam* which reaches to the most remote fancy that looms up within the depths of a profound slumber. But, Lorédan, how did you fare? did you rest?"

"Yes, Edward; and I am not well awake even yet."

"The fact is your eyes do look somewhat hazy. . . . Has anybody told you whither we are now bound?"

"For Elephant Lake."

"May the devil caress me, but there is not one of these names upon our African charts! The Jonathans have performed all these baptisms. What a pity that so delightful a region remains uninhabited! Verily, men become, for me, a greater source of astonishment every day. Here, now, for the last six thousand years they have been peopling this globe, and it has never occurred to any of them to *make capital of this* charming coast.

"Off in Finland and Iceland, in Scotland and Norway, in Sweden, Russia and Lapland, with their head gears of snow and their iceberg boots they marry and are given in marriage, while, here, nobody weds, within these African wilds, beautiful with trees and flowers, and watered by lakes and rivers; within these celestial cities in which there is everything but houses!

"Can you conceive how the world could have witnessed the birth of so many XERXES and CAMBYSES, so many ATTILAS and GENSERICS, stupid marauders, who plundered to cure their melancholy, and that at no time have kings and emperors leagued together to indulge in the immense distraction of a crusade against these mysteries of Africa? Why, there is pastime here, of a duration to afford endless amusement to the everlasting childhood of our race! When artillery had been invented, they should, like baptized Attilas, have set on foot an expedition of one hundred thousand men, with parks of ordnance and enormous stores of provisions against hunger and thirst. The inaccessible frontier of Africa should have been assailed, and a breach opened through this bristling chaos of brambles, through this iron-fibred granite and this brazen compactness of forest, within whose dark depths, all the monsters of Noah's ark roar, hiss and bellow!

"They should have pushed forward and given battle to this shaggy host of lions, elephants and panthers, who, because, forsooth, their teeth were sharper and their claws were bigger, appropriated the fairest portion of earthly booty to themselves, in the ancient division between Sem, Cham and Japhet! Their reason, by my faith, was a *capital* one!—a brute's reason and yet the one that pre-

ailed! Man resigned himself to snow, rain, slush, to the uninhabitable in fact, while, with a generosity provokingly absurd, he abandoned this most beautiful region to the enjoyment of creatures which we are pleased to condemn as animals! Far from sharing in the glory of a magnificent African enterprise, men are better pleased, it seems, to parcel themselves out into Frenchmen, Englishmen and Germans, that they may enjoy the rare sport of canonading each other and of pilfering a few acres of black mud to the north!

"And you will find historians who waste their lives in recording the long story of these insipid brawls, one of which is as much like the other, as the pages upon which they are described! Worthy sport, truly! that of butchering young men at the point of the bayonet, of killing aged ones by despair, of slaughtering infants by misery and destroying women by grief! and all to gain nothing! With what eager interest, on the other hand, would we not devour the glorious bulletin of victory, which we would receive of a crusade into central Africa! With what avidity would we not pour over the pages upon which we would follow this Grand Army of Europe, one hundred thousand gladiators leaping into the arena of the tropics, beneath the storm of whose artillery we see the tall forests bend like grass before the beating tempest! With what wild enthusiasm we would gather around these brave warriors, as they would come in at the death of an entire continent, which struggles beneath their blows with rage-distended claws, gnashing of savage teeth, swaying of massive trunks, bristling of stiffened manes, and a roaring as hoarse and terrible as the rumblings of a volcano! Yes, I would

willingly die to-morrow, were I certain that, one day, this wonderful campaign would be an actual fact."

Here, Sir Edward glanced at Lorédan. Upon every line of his friend's countenance he remarked an unknown expression. In another tone, he added:

"My dear friend, do you intend to force me to maintain a perpetual monologue? Have you nothing but monosyllables in reply to my discourses? Your conduct is ungenerous."

"You are right, Edward," replied Lorédan with a false smile; "but what do you want me to say? . . . It is the way I am made. . . These woods make me sad. . . I would prefer the *Boulevard des Italiens*."

"Well said, indeed! there now is a spark of good humor!"

"Edward, I must say that, a while ago, you made me very sad."

"I, Lorédan, I make you sad! I, gaiety made man! Joy incarnate! Why, it appears to me that the trees salute me with a smile as I pass; that the sun himself, to dart his rays through the azure over head, seeks me through this dense mass of verdure! No, no! Lorédan, you are blind or you are unjust."

"Yes, Edward; a while ago, as you concluded what you styled your monologue, your face, without your knowledge, was melancholy, when you pronounced the words: *I would willingly die to-morrow!* . . . I thought I saw in your eyes the ominous light of a presentiment."

Sir Edward stopped and fixed upon Lorédan a look which penetrated to his very heart.

"*Hush, Lorédan!*" said he in a low voice; "you are too

young to be keen; you observed nothing in my looks; I am sure of my face, it never betrays me. I have trained it to an eternal repose. You have gathered something from the air around you. In this land of mystery, there are floating about you echoes as clear as the tinkling of hollow brass. There is a secret upon your lips; something which, in honor, you cannot, you ought not to reveal even to me who, like yourself, am possessed of it."

"Something honor forbids me to reveal!" said Lorédan, his eye fixed and dazed with surprise. . . . "Which honor forbids me to reveal! . . . Not at all, Edward. . . . I swear to you. . . . No. . . . I have no secret which would compromise your loyalty. . . ."

"Why, then, did you find anything strange in so ordinary a phrase as: *I would willingly die to-morrow?* Moreover, have I not told you, a hundred times, that I look upon the present day as my last? that, when retiring at night, I feel that I am going to my doom and that my waking is to me a resurrection?"

"Lorédan, where you refrain from speaking your silence says everything: your noble countenance is incapable of deception. I am a witness of the efforts you are making to hide from me the [interior emotion, which the palor of your brow and the glassy stare of your eye would fain conceal. . . . You are possessor of something evil and it trembles upon your lips. . . . Lorédan, my friend, be advised by me and keep your secret; bury it within the deepest recesses of your soul. My life and my honor are in this secret, which the lake breeze has carried to your ears: I understand . . . but the savage would put a different interpretation upon this knowledge: in his eyes, I would have proved false to my solemn oath.

"God is my witness that, on the contrary, I have made every effort to lead you astray as to the condition of my soul; that I developed this long scheme of an invasion into unpeopled Africa, to divert your attention from my own situation. Your honor is bound up with mine. Not only is it your duty to forget, but to do more. Towards Willy, your conduct must be unreserved and marked by all the cordial feelings of a friend. Furthermore, in your conversations with him, you must ever wear a tranquillity upon your features which will leave little room for the suspicion that you are possessed of any secret knowledge; you will, in fine, bear yourself towards him to-day and to-morrow as you did yesterday. . . . On these conditions, Lorédan, will I refrain from placing the muzzle of this pistol against my head and pulling the trigger."

Sir Edward placed his hand upon the pommel of his pistol."

Lorédan, whom this maze of impenetrable mysteries had completely bewildered, was roused from his stupor only when he heard the menace which Sir Edward pronounced against himself. This last sentence drove everything else from his mind, and commanded him to desist from endeavoring to fathom the soul of his friend. Quickly seizing Sir Edward's hand, he said:

"Edward, I will be what I was yesterday; I swear it upon my honor!"

At the same moment, Sir Edward resumed his customary vein.

"Thanks, Lorédan," said he; "our thoughts and our faces have become a little disturbed during this brief intercourse. . . . Here are Nizam and Willy returning to meet

us. . . . Attention. . . . Oh! I had almost forgotten to rearrange my verses upon the lion. . . . It will not do to lose that slip of paper. . . . It is precious, destined, as you know, for Elmina. . . . The movement of my hand, a moment ago, displaced it. . . . Lorédan, although I do not question your firmness, allow me to test you. . . . I want you to answer every question with your happiest smile. This will be a specimen from which I can judge how you will act before Willy. Listen, now. . . . I have inserted this fold of paper here, where it is so evident, that it will strike the eyes of all. If I die to-morrow, you will take this little manuscript, destined, as I told you, for Elmina; you alone will read it, once only, and carefully, to ascertain whether it contain any errors in natural history. Elmina is not to be trifled with in a chapter on lions. . . . Answer me, Lorédan."

"All your wishes shall be fulfilled, Edward, but let us hope. . . ."

"Entertain no hopes. Watch your features! here is Willy."

"Edward, a man may smile even to the tomb; look at me."

"Excellent; keep on."

The situation was so unusual that Lorédan was forced to transform himself.

During this conflict of thickly crowding mysteries, there was but one thing clearly defined, and that became obscured in the wild excitement of the moment:

*Rita does not love you, and never will.*

At first, those words flashed before the eyes of Lorédan like flames of brilliant lightning, but a little reflection taught him to modify the alarming character of the phrase.

On what grounds could Sir Edward affirm this? Why should he prefer to venture so much on account of this young girl? And further, if, in the last extremity, he must admit the indifference or coldness of the heavenly creole, he would, as many others had done, marry a woman resigned to her fate through a sense of duty, who would bestow upon her husband, after marriage, the love she refused him before it.

An ordinary occurrence enough in Europe. In the delirium of passions which fire the heart and madden the senses, persons experience so poignant a grief, and so intolerable a pain, at the idea of losing the woman upon whom they have set their affections, that the weakest argument brings with it an interval of consolation.

Nizam and Willy, in advance of the main body of the hunters, had reached the outskirts of the forest, and were retracing their steps to issue new instructions made necessary by a phenomenon of an inexplicable nature.

"The night will shortly be upon us," said Nizam, addressing the hunters, according to Willy's instructions, in the capacity of chief; "we shall rest here until the setting of the early stars. It is not permitted to wander beyond the outermost trees or to venture alone upon the plain. Moreover, to-night, absolute silence is earnestly recommended. . . . Now, Sir Edward and Monsieur de Gessin, if you desire to experience, at a distance, the emotions incident to the chase, accompany me, but do not move a step in advance of me. Lave your hands, and face, and hair in these running waters, and perfume yourselves with the aromas abounding here. The elephant's sense of smell is *marvelous*; and no wonder, his nose is his trunk. He

easily scents the human perspiration at a thousand paces, so that it becomes necessary to track him to pull his teeth."

When the two friends had prepared themselves for the elephant hunt, by bathing in the sweet waters of a neighboring stream, and had enveloped their persons in the rich odors that filled the thickets, they followed Nizam to the outer edge of the forest. Through long vistas which, here and there, interrupted the deep shade of the dusky woodland, they very clearly distinguished a vast plain rolling away towards the north. As if by a caprice so frequent in an African wilderness, the weird majesty of towering forest trees suddenly disappeared. As far as the eye could reach, the landscape was one endless variety of all the luxuriant shrubs upon which the genial sun of Africa forever loves to smile.

The broom, the cactus, the cytissus, the euphorbia and the aloe stalk mingling their varied hues into one vast pattern, resembled, at a distance, a broad Persian carpet, stretched, from forest to mountain, beneath the feet of the giant monarch of the wilderness.

Nizam tapped Sir Edward upon the shoulder, and, pointing through one of those green vistas, whose perfect symmetry resembled that of an optical tube, made a sign to him which meant: Look, yonder!

All the hunters put themselves in a position from which they could follow the direction indicated by Nizam.

At the farther edge of the plain, and at the foot of a barren mountain, whose rugged pile appeared to be the work of some terrestrial commotion that rent its huge mass into a million fragments, a deep shadow, much like a grey cloud descending the mountain side and hovering among

the thickets, was seen to pass just above the low shrubbery of the plain.

Willy drew near to Sir Edward, and addressed him in a manner which both understood perfectly :

"Sir Edward," said he, "are you familiar with that species of game?"

"I have eaten of it at Tranquebar, Master Willy," returned Sir Edward, with a perfectly natural smile upon his features."

"That is a superb elephant!" said Nizam; "I reckon his tusks at a hundred and fifty pounds."

"Can you see him distinctly, Monsieur de Gessin?" asked Willy.

"How! see him?" said Lorédan; "I can even distinguish the bengali flitting about his ear."

"Very good, Lorédan," said Edward, in a whisper to his friend.

"But, tell me, Nizam," continued Lorédan: "what do you find unusual in the appearance of this elephant? Are we not within the territory of these animals?"

"Have you ever studied these fellows of the proboscis, Monsieur de Gessin?"

"Never, Nizam: those without it have absorbed my time so completely, that I have not been at leisure to carry my enquiries higher."

"Capital," said Edward.

"Well, Sir," continued Nizam, "had you given your time to the elephant, you would, at this moment, find yourself equally embarrassed with me."

"How so? Explain yourself, Nizam; there is, doubtless, something in this that will amuse us."

"Well! This elephant is simply incomprehensible; at least, I fail to understand him. He is doing what an elephant never did before. In the first place, the fellow is lingering upon the plain just before sundown. Now, it is well known that sunrise is the hour in which elephants delight; so much so, that they are said, like the pagans, to adore the sun. They dread the night, from a fear of lions and precipices; hence, the setting of the sun makes them sad. Accordingly, they retire early with their wives and children, to their domestic retreats. They remove to narrow valleys, mountain gorges, or rocky table lands where they sleep standing during the dark hours of plunder and carnage. They much resemble the heads of well regulated households who never suffer themselves to be overtaken by the night away from the family hearth. Here, however, you have an elephant pacing the open plain with all the gravity of a bonze. You would almost say that he is counting his steps; for hardly has he made a thousand from east to west, when he retraces them from west to east. He appears to be keeping guard over the mountain. Among men, a person who affects an extraordinary mode of action would be little heeded; but, among animals, it is quite otherwise. As it is not in their nature to invent, we may take it for granted that, when the most intelligent do follow an unusual line of conduct, there is something extraordinary in their neighborhood. Not unfrequently, I am able to solve enigmas of this nature; but, to-day, I find myself at a loss. Sir Edward, you have witnessed many a chase in India, will you not assist me to discover this elephant's secret?"

"Nizam," replied Sir Edward with a charming gallan-

try, "we will be obliged to ask the elephant himself, and to let our rifles do our talking; will we not, Master Willy?"

"In good time, Sir Edward," answered Willy.

"Yes," said Nizam, "at the proper moment; but, as head of this expedition, I will refrain from ordering an advance before I have understood my elephant. His whole surrounding is connected with mystery. We must preserve our lives and capture his ivory. When I can see more clearly, we will push on; meanwhile, as the night is long, I have ample opportunity for reflection. . . ."

With these words, Nizam waved a parting salute to the setting sun, and stretched himself beneath an arbor of mimosas.

Induced by the stillness of the night, in which they were suddenly enveloped, the hunters followed the example of their chief. The only sounds that broke the dead silence were these words, pronounced in a low tone:

"To-morrow, Sir Edward."

"To-morrow."

In circumstances like this, the most common-place and simple expressions carry with them a terrible significance.

The hunters left the forest, as the first pale tints of the morning were discovered among the eastern constellations.

Willy had indicated the plan of attack to Nizam, who asked nothing better than to obey him occasionally, in a small matter of strategy on which, in his own eyes, very little depended.

The hunters advanced in two columns disposed in the form of a V, *en echelon*, man for man, at sixty paces apart.

Nizam occupied a position in the rear that he might *direct* the movement of the columns of which he was the

pivot. Willy lead off the right wing of the V, after inviting Sir Edward to occupy the corresponding position upon the left, with an intervening space, a quarter rifle-range in breadth, between them. The ground, bristling with shrubs and thick briery plants, impeded their march in the darkness; but with the rising of the sun, they pushed forward more rapidly. Nothing was changed in the landscape they had seen the evening before. To the right and the left, the plain was flanked by the thick foliage of the forest. The horizon towards the north was still encumbered by the same sombre grey mountain, as barren and rugged as a giant's quarry. On the outskirts of the green, the identical living form, seen at night fall, was still transporting itself rather than walking through thickets of cactus, euphorbias and yellow broom, and amidst defiles of rocks whose color resembled its own dull grey.

Putting his little finger upon his lower lip, Nizam imitated the prelude to the sweet warbling of the bengalee, as it wakes upon the topmost branches of the *Tannamaram*.

At the signal, the hunters stood still. The Indian chief, monarch of the wilderness, bent himself down beneath the foliage of the lowest shrubbery, and assuming the guise and quartered pose of *Vishnu* incarnate in a dwarf, he crawled, with the swiftness of a lizard, to the feet of Willy.

The savage son of Jonathan bent down until his ear touched the Indian's lips:

"If this elephant," whispered Nizam, "is not a magician or a fool, there is some great danger in the neighborhood. I have never seen anything like this in my life. The brute has been pacing up and down the same path all night, like the fakir Tody before the Temple-tomb of

Ravana. I am completely outwitted. Master, yonder sentinel should not be allowed to enter camp. Your eye never yet missent a bullet; it would check the wing of the colibri in its flight; it will not fail then, this time, to pierce the ear of one of the grandest of elephants. Our success in this chase depends upon the first shot."

"I understand, Nizam," replied Willy in a voice which was low and stifled by some extraordinary emotion. "Retire, now, and count upon the double charge in my rifle."

"You will not, Master, I am sure, fire the second time."

"I may not, Nizam."

The servant looked with surprise at Willy's pale face, and, although chief, he obeyed at a sign from his young master, commanding him to withdraw forthwith.

The countenance, the pallor and the sign with which Willy dismissed him were full of mystery to Nizam.

Either line now resumed its march, drawing farther apart at the extremities, as they approached the mysterious elephant.

That its aim might be more certainly concealed, Willy lowered his piece until it was hid by the shrubbery.

Four loud reports were heard at almost the same instant.

After the fourth, Sir Edward, whose head and shoulders overtopped the broom thicket, stooped down to pick up his straw hat, which had been knocked off by a ball. His action was not, however, remarked by the other hunters, whose whole attention was absorbed by Willy and the elephant.

Nizam cried out, at the top of his voice:

"What has come over Willy! his two shots have been

lost! Hurrah for Sir Edward! both his fires have taken effect, but upon the brute's cuirass of a neck."

Sir Edward and Lorédan darted through the thicket to succor Willy, in pursuit of whom the elephant started with an astonishing swiftness. At each bound, Lorédan halted to aim a ball at the animal's ear; but Willy and the colossus being along the same range, he did not dare to pull the trigger. The same fear withheld the other hunters.

Sir Edward, with his pistol drawn and cocked, exclaimed:

"Don't shoot! we must dispatch the fellow, as Eleazar Maccabeus killed his brute, at the battle of Modin!"

With the animal ten steps behind him, Willy uttered a cry and dropped his arms. Nizam roared out in a voice of thunder:

"Halt!"

The young savages obeyed the order of their Indian chief.

Sir Edward and Lorédan, in hot pursuit of the elephant, did not hear Nizam's command, and continued to dash on, with superhuman efforts, through the brambles that lay before them, over the plain. A deadly pallor suffused their faces, for that which they now witnessed was a horrible scene.

With his trunk, the elephant snatched the young hunter from the ground, swung him above his head, as lightly as a wisp of rice straw, and gently placed the young man upon his neck, raising his large ears as he did so, that Willy might be provided with a support upon which to rest his hands.

It was the work of an instant.

*Sir Edward and Lorédan were now within a dozen*

leaps of the animal, when, to their inexpressible surprise, Willy cried out :

“Stop! Hold your fire!”

As he uttered these words, young Jonathan, seated upon either edge of a living precipice, was cleaving the air with the boldness and steadiness of a cavalier inured to this formidable horsemanship. Sir Edward and Lorédan, fixed motionless to the spot upon which Willy had arrested their course, followed this novel sort of steeple chase with a gaze of utter bewilderment.

With the instinct of a traveler who is acquainted with the route, the giant quadruped plunged forward in the direction of the southern horizon ; in a brief space he had crossed the plain, and the hunters lost sight of him as he disappeared in the distance, beneath the arching forest of mimosas, like a balloon bearing upon its dome the dim figure of some hardy aeronaut.

“It is useless to endeavor to hold one’s self proof against wonder,” said Sir Edward, re-adjusting his dress as he spoke, and wiping his forehead and hair, which were dripping with perspiration. “I admit that, this time, there is enough to astonish even Lord Bolingbroke! Life does cut capers like this sometimes. . . . Take breath, Lorédan . . . breathe before you speak. . . . You were going to throw yourself under the belly of the elephant, were you not? . . . . That was my own plan. . . . The Bible provides for every emergency. . . . I was thinking of the elephant of Antiochus Eupator, which gave way before precisely that mode of attack. . . . This is a capital inauguration of the chase! . . . . It is the elephant that is hunting men. Before *night*, we’ll each, in spite of ourselves, be astride of an

elephant. . . . I must make a note of this little anecdote, for if fancy moves me to again play the *savant*, I will publish it in London. . . . Good! here is Nizam and his braves bringing up the rear. . . . Let us wait for them. . . . Nizam will explain this. . . . He explains everything. . . . What an oppressive heat. . . . Lorédan, I never met anything like this in SAAVERS' *Natural History*. . . . Does BUFFON make mention of this species of chase, in his chapter on the *Elephant*? . . . You are examining my hat are you? . . . It has been torn by a cactus briar; look at the rent. . . ."

"A person would declare that a bullet had passed through it, Edward."

"My friend, elephants are capable of anything. Who knows but that our fellow carried a rifle?"

At these words, Nizam and the remainder of the party came up with them. His countenance was quite calm, and Sir Edward, whose day of surprise had, at length, arrived, found himself at a loss to account for this immovable attitude of the Indian, after the frightful catastrophe which had befallen Willy.

"Sir Edward," said Nizam, saluting him respectfully, "you fired two superb shots. Both grazed the vulnerable spot in the brute's hide; for I saw his left ear tremble twice. But Willy! his awkward aim, to-day, was a very lucky thing; his hand trembled. Had his aim been as deadly as it usually is, he would now be inconsolable! . . ."

"Good!" replied Sir Edward, "the mystery thickens. The day has begun well. . . . You tell me then, Nizam, that Willy would have been inconsolable had he killed that animal?"

"You, evidently, did not comprehend the scene you just witnessed, Sir Edward."

"I was waiting for you, Nizam, to get an explanation."

"It is a very simple one. It was to you, was it not, to whom I recounted, the other day, the story of Miss Elmina's elephant Jemidar?"

"Ah! now, I am getting at the riddle. . . ."

"That was Jemidar. He recognized Willy and is now carrying him home to the Virginia."

"Nizam, after this solution, our late scene, more than ever, baffles my comprehension."

"How so, Sir Edward?"

"In this way: you were of the belief that your Jemidar was some time dead and had long lain buried among the graves of his ancestors. Here he is, risen. Rigorously, of course, this might be conceivable. But I am unable to understand why this elephant paces up and down here, night and day, browsing upon the cytissus, and wearing a more evident dejection at his loss than ordinarily oppresses widowers of the human kind. In any case, his grief has not made him lean."

"Sir Edward, you are better skilled in the knowledge of tigers than of elephants! Within an hour, you will understand Jemidar as well as I do. . . . Do you see, yonder, that mountain with its steep and rocky defiles? It is the summit of an extensive chain separating two endless valleys. These regions have been selected, as if upon the most cordial understanding, by lions and elephants respectively. Every body, you know, must live. The lion, accordingly, reigns over the solitudes of the west, in the vicinity of the lakes and forests frequented by the gazelle;

while the pasture lands of the east, constitute the broad estate of his sober neighbor, the elephant. Now and then, of course, for there are spiteful characters in every community, a solitary encounter takes place between the ill-affected of either nation. There are snappish individuals everywhere. The great body, however, of these quadrupeds, is actuated by good sense, and, as a rule, the proboscis respects the claw. Yet, the elephant did not always occupy that vale in the east. There was an emigration of these animals, dating as far back as the first hunting expeditions of the elder Jonathan. Can you distinguish that grey peak, on the left, looming up over the trees that skirt the horizon? At its base was the ancient home of the elephant; where, from the days of creation, it may be, he reared his mighty progeny. But the voice of man and the click of the rifle drove him from those haunts of the childhood of his gigantic race. That is the limit to which the elder Jonathan penetrated. Only a few elephants of an unsociable temper still persist in lingering upon the domain of their fathers, where, at times, they engage in desperate conflict with the brute spoilers of the wilderness. In our quest of ivory, it is upon these solitary stragglers from the great family of elephants, philosophers who have exiled themselves from society, that we are forced to count for supplies. The larger animals are very much like trees: one here and there, in advance, indicates the neighborhood of the main body of the herd or the forest. Jemidar, then, went to join the great tribe of his people, not in the west, around the base of that grey summit, but upon their new reserve, here in the east.

"Fancy, now, the grief and astonishment of our ele-

phant, the favorite of beautiful Elmina, when he perceived the approach of his old friend, Neptunio, with the servants of the house, whom he scented afar off. Jemidar could not, in conscience, remain with his own people; he was unwilling to harm the inmates of the Virginia, nor did he, on the other hand, wish to come by his death at their hands. Now note well, Sir Edward, how the beast reasoned. He hit upon this good plan: he left his tribe, quit his pastures and retired apart, to this side of the mountain. All this, by way of parenthesis, bodes nothing good for Neptunio and our scouts. The fault is Master Willy's who, the other evening, in a distraction for which I can not account, gave one order instead of another. . . . Will you tell me, now, why it is that Jemidar paced up and down here for a day and a night, when, naturally speaking, he should have sought shelter among the rocks or in the forest?

"This, too, has its explanation. An elephant never acts but with something like an idea. Jemidar understood that all the hunters were not with Neptunio; and he was particularly struck with the absence of his best friends, Willy and Elmina. Hence he placed himself in this prominent position and directly in our path, supposing, unfortunately, that we were gifted with more intelligence than we have really manifested. The noble beast did us the honor of believing that we would recognize him, as we approached, since, at a distance, he easily distinguished us. In return, poor Jemidar became a target for your two balls, Sir Edward, and it is, simply, a miracle that he escaped the invariably mortal aim of Willy. But the end is not here, Sir Edward; the most essential for us is this:

by carrying Willy to the Virginia, Jemidar gives us to understand that we are in the vicinity of some unusual danger. Neptunio and the scouts have, perhaps, perished by this time, or, if they are yet alive, are in immediate need of our assistance. Sir Edward and you, Monsieur de Gessin, if you have recovered from your fiery charge, we will move on whither duty calls us."

"Let us push on!" replied Sir Edward, loading his rifle.

"Lead on!" echoed Lorédan.

Nizam put himself at the head of the little troop, taking the path to the mountain. The other hunters followed him at a trot. A broad belt of sand separated the verdure of the plain from the barren mountain side. Here and there, upon sheltered spots, Nizam perceived naked footprints leading up the declivity, but this he kept to himself. The mountain, which, when seen at a distance, could mask its horrors, now revealed itself in all its abrupt majesty. Its slender contour lines deepened into dark ravines; the tiny specks that dotted its unbroken surface, opened down into gaping abysses, while every sandy pebble fastened upon its sloping sides developed into gigantic blocks. The only path along which they could scale the mountain lay up enormous rocky ledges which, in the hazy light of an African sun, resembled the ruins of heaven's stairway.

But three more ledges and the hunters had gained the summit, when a noise, unknown in these solitudes, reverberated with a prolonged echo, between either horizon.

"There they are!" cried Nizam.

And with the agility of a chamois, he leaped upon the topmost ledge.

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE INTERIOR OF AFRICA.

FROM the summit of this natural pyramid they saw, extended below them, a vast plain upon which the Creator appeared to have strewn broadcast pictures of desolation and forms of beauty, figures of life and images of death.

The entire valley was an endless luxuriance of green interspersed with upheaving rocks, glistening lakes, flowery hillocks, abrupt mountains, and tiny rivers whose gentle streamlets were lost in the smoking abysses of the cataract. On the east, two mountains, violently wrenched asunder by volcanic convulsions, permitted a distant view of the Arabian ocean reposing afar off upon the outermost edge of the horizon.

But it was not this stupendous aspect of nature which caused the hunters to gaze in wonder on the plain. They scarcely deigned to cast a curious glance upon the charming but dreadful panorama unfolded before them.

The eyes of all were fixed upon a slender thread of

smoke which curled upwards from the bosom of the rocks that girt the base of the southern slope. The most ordinary thing in the world, a whiff of smoke, seen in the centre of these wilds, was enough to terrify the stoutest heart. Nizam and his followers understood this signal of distress, and, peering out over the steep descent that went down upon the other side of the mountain they had just scaled, the Indian chief sought amid the gulfs, ravines and precipices beneath him, to catch a glimpse of the unfortunate hunters.

At the summit of the mountain, they anxiously awaited a second report which was to determine Nizam's precise line of descent.

But this last agonizing appeal failed to rise from the depths. What followed was like the silence of a vessel in distress, which, unable to make its cries heard upon the shore, founders, when every effort has been put forth in vain to keep her afloat.

It were an imprudence to quit the heights, and to grope their way down the colossal ruins of this stairway in the north. Once entangled among the dangers that would everywhere beset them along the descent, Nizam and his men would be without any fixed point from which to reconnoitre and consult upon a secure line of march. Below the first steps in this crumbling stairway, everything—tree, plain, horizon would vanish: eye, hand and foot would meet nothing but the towering peaks that jutted up from the ledges of this rugged mountain, which, at some remote period, had been hurled by volcanic action heavenwards to fall back upon the earth in a shower of granite blocks.

And then, when the fatal risks which the descent would inevitably entail should, when too late, make themselves manifest, how were they, entangled in a labyrinth of dizzy precipices, again to reach the summit along the edges of so many abysses? To attempt it, would soon establish the reality of those horrid dreams, in which despair, shut out from all possible exit, falls to convulsively debating its chances within the narrow compass of some vault of brass, whose massive arches sink down upon the forehead, press against the breast, close out the light from the eye and stifle the breath in the heart.

Following the perpendicular descent of the abyss with his piercing eye, Nizam tried to fathom those mysteries in which human beings, dead or alive, were at that moment enveloped. When the last cloud of smoke had melted away, it appeared to him that the guiding thread of this labyrinth had fallen from his hands.

That he might not interrupt Nizam in his meditation, Sir Edward went aside, and occupied himself in sketching a part of the vast scenery which unfolded around them in all its majesty.

Lorédan was leaning over the work of his friend; but his eyes, far from following the bent of his brow, were traversing twenty leagues of desert to fix their gaze upon the blessed horizon of his love.

As he sketched, Sir Edward, now and then, exchanged a word with Lorédan:

"Do you not fancy sketching a virgin landscape, Lorédan?"

"I do, but not here, Sir Edward."

"And why not here? The *atelier* is a handsome one

and thoroughly lighted. The landscape poses admirably and with a calm that actually provokes the pencil. Not a blade of grass is stirring. I feel as if this charming scene was smiling upon my work, with all the maiden modesty of a young damsel sitting for her first portrait."

"Do you know, Edward, that, to me, Nizam looks very anxious?"

"Oh! my dear sir, do not give yourself the slightest trouble on that score; Nizam would get out of hell. . . . Lorédan, that grey ridge, over there, of which Nizam was speaking this morning, makes a superb horizon; its pink contrasts so charmingly with the gilded azure of the sky and the bright green of the foliage! . . . I have chosen it as the *point de vue* for Elmina. She will, I am sure, be delighted with my offering. That is the spot upon which her gallant father raised the African hunter's Pillar of Hercules. . . . I will put this landscape on exhibition, in the 'National Gallery' at Charing-Cross, above this title: *The Ancient Kingdom of the Elephants*. . . I am very curious to hear what Kemble will have to say about it in his 'Quarterly Review.'"

"Edward, my good fellow, look at Nizam; he is resting his head upon his hand . . . searching for an idea. . . ."

"Lorédan, you are a man of little faith, as the Bible puts it. Listen to me: at this moment, there are, in our large cities, thousands of miserable wretches, rolling in wealth, if you wish, well dressed, in luxurious apartments and high living, who, to kill time, are indulging in the nameless crimes which they have artfully planned. This very evening, these same creatures will retire to rest, and you will not hear that, to-night, or to-morrow, or the night

after, a thunderbolt crushed them out of existence! Do you, then, imagine that God will deal more rigorously with us, that he will squeeze the life out of us here, between two masses of rock or between the flanks of a brace of elephants; we, who are doing harm to no one, who are spending ourselves with travel and covering ourselves with perspiration in our eagerness to admire the unpublished marvels of God's handiwork? . . . Have more courage, Lorédan; we have been rescued from the dangers of fire, the perils of the ocean, the treachery of the river and the snares of the plain; we will yet escape the terrors of the mountain; we are nearer to heaven, this time, and heaven lends a helping hand to its neighbors."

A fresh discharge of firearms now resounded in the depths, and Nizam raised a shout of joy. A thick volume of smoke slowly mounted from the abyss, reflecting the bright colors of the rainbow and the rich lustre of gold as it passed upward into the sunlight. At length, Nizam was able, at a glance, to note the rocks whose jutting ledges evidently concealed Neptunio and his hunters, suffering nothing but the smoke from their rifles to climb up through dark crevices, resembling the chimneys of a Cyclopean forge. When, therefore, the sagacious Indian had staked out in his mind the steep path along which he was to follow in descending down these jutting masses of granite, he gathered the party around him and thus addressed them:

"Listen attentively, my comrades: I am going down first; when you see that I have gained that crag, half in the shade, half in the sun, and beyond which nothing is distinctly visible, if I make this sign with my hand: *Come*, one of you will detach himself from the rest and

join me; a second will not start before the same sign shall have been repeated by the first; thus for the third, the fourth, on to the last. Should the signaling cease, it will indicate that the descent has been found impracticable, or that a return to these heights is impossible. I recommend the greatest prudence. I will sound the descent, and every one of you will follow in my steps. Bear in mind that, beneath those rocks, beset by some nameless danger, which I am yet at a loss to understand, there are other comrades calling upon us."

A murmur of approbation followed the words of Nizam. Sir Edward folded up his sketch and his desk with the nicest attention, and approaching the chief:

"Your plan is a good one," he said, "my gallant Nizam, and I command you to order me to descend the mountain after you. Remember that I am an Englishman, and that you owe this favor to a fellow citizen."

Nizam, with a respectful bow, granted his request.

"And now, tell me, Nizam," continued Sir Edward—"for it appears to me that on your former hunts you never followed this highway of precipices—permit me to make an observation: was it, do you think, altogether necessary to climb up this far, to put ourselves in a position where it will be impossible to descend?"

"Sir Edward," said Nizam, "to reach Elephant Lake we usually cross this mountain. When we have gained its summit, however, we are accustomed to turn to the left, and descend, by an easy slope, into a valley in which, on other expeditions, we happened upon pretty fair game. But, to-day, we are forced to abandon the descent on our left, for the rifles of our scouts call us into yonder depths."

To wheel around the western declivity of the mountain, and reach the lake along the road followed by Neptunio and his men, would occupy an entire day. Since, therefore, the danger is pressing, we must reach the bottom along the shortest possible line, and show ourselves to our friends in distress."

Nizam dropped from ledge to ledge with the strength and agility of the Indian who, from childhood, has inured his naked feet to grapple as nervously as a pair of claws with the rugged sides of the mountain. In the twinkling of an eye, he had reached the last overhanging ledge; it appeared to be the verge of a perpendicular precipice.

Perched upon this trembling pedestal, he looked out over the abyss, like an eagle about to swoop down from its aerie, then, turning toward the hunters, he gave the concerted signal. Sir Edward buckled his rifle about him, secured his pistols, his light hunting baggage, and followed after Nizam, who had, meanwhile, disappeared to reach his second station. Lorédan took Sir Edward's place, and after him the young Makidas went down, each in turn, giving signal after signal.

As it swelled into a continuous roar, the echoes of this wilderness of precipices caught up and repeated the rumbling of the flying rocks that leaped from under the feet and hands of the hunters, and bounded into the gulf below, like a cataract of granite.

Not far from the plain, Nizam found himself upon a plateau overlooking a small valley and hillock, or, rather, an enormous pile of colossal rocks, the aspect of which not a little resembled the ancient temple of *Mawalibouram*, which, to-day, is a hill rising upon the ruins of the *Seven-*

*Pagodas*, the name it bears upon the chart of eastern navigators.

Nizam, whose Indian fancy could everywhere institute a comparison, was not slow to perceive this one. He even found it more exact when, within the gaps opening up through the ruins, he could distinguish human figures, and at the foot of the little eminence, the gigantic forms of the sacred animals, which at a distance called to his mind, by their structure, the ox Nandy or the elephant Iravalti.

These figures did not, however, long retain their motionless attitude. Nizam saw the statues move in their niches. At the same time, human cries borne, with fearful distinctness, upon the wings of the mountain echo, issued from the hill side, and the elephant guards at the base of the ruined temple tottered, for a moment, upon their massive supports. The frightful reality now flashed upon Nizam. Neptunio and his four scouts, indiscreetly venturing westward, into a forest of Guinea grass and sugar cane, within which the herd of elephants was regaling itself upon a rich pasture, were forced to retreat before superior numbers, and pursued by their redoubtable game, had taken refuge upon this mound of debris, where teeth and trunk were alike unable to harm them. The elephants, goaded into paroxysms of mighty rage against these pygmies who dared to disturb the quiet pleasure of their good cheer, had, during the last two days, blockaded their inaccessible stronghold, with the very evident determination of reducing the enemy to starvation, or of clubbing him and grinding him to powder, if he ventured from his desert fortress.

It may well be supposed, too, that these animals, whose memory is a marvel and whose rancor is undying, scented

the odor of an enemy, whom they recognized as the hateful Makidas, for whose destruction they had formerly issued from the forest of Sitsikamma.

The scouts had already expended their supply of ammunition, but their balls had been discharged against impenetrable breast plates. Along the whole line of blockade, the elephants were careful to shelter their ears behind masses of rock, exposing to the lead of their enemy nothing but their metallic hides, which were as hard as the rocks around them.

In a little while, Nizam's troop had rejoined him. The elephants showed signs of uneasiness, for they cast side-long glances at this new enemy who had apparently fallen from the sky.

The precaution which led them to shelter themselves from Neptunio's fire left them a fair mark for the rifles of Nizam.

"That's a rich mine of ivory, Nizam?" said Sir Edward.

"A very rich mine, Sir Edward."

"Rather difficult to work, though, I should suppose."

"Listen to me, all of you," cried Nizam. "Our business, to-day, is to deliver Neptunio and our scouts; we will think of ivory afterwards. The foot of the hillock, upon which our scouts are besieged, is separated from the mountain by a belt of sand only thirty paces wide. At its base, there are four fellows of the trunk on guard. Our first endeavor must be to remove these. We are at half range from them. I have signified to Neptunio, by gesture, how he is to act; as soon as he sees these guardsmen drop, he and his men will dash down the hill like a troop of panthers and join *us*, before the main body, posted on the other side of the mound, shall have had time to replace their picket."

Nizam grouped his hunters into bands of three, assigning to each party, for target, one of the elephants at the base of the hill. At a signal from Nizam, all the rifles went off, like a single discharge.

Grey clouds of smoke for a moment rested upon the little valley. A horrid concert of frightened birds, mingled with the whoops of the savages, the groans of the wounded monsters and the echoes of the caverns, on a sudden lent to the deep solitude of the place an unutterable character of woe and desolation.

At the flash of Nizam's rifles, and without questioning the effect of his fire, Neptunio and his scouts, attentive to the slightest gesture of their Indian chief, swooped down from their rocky heights with the swiftness of eagles.

These wily and active savages understood immediately that they were to seize their opportunity on the wing, as their mammoth guard would be killed, wounded, or stunned by the terrific explosion.

When the smoky cloud had, like a curtain, been drawn aside, the hunters were permitted a clear view of the eminence; the scouts had already run the blockade and were rapidly scaling the mountain side. Although the aim was excellent, it was not a destructive one. One elephant only was dead, lying at the foot of the hill like a grey rock in a lake of sand; the other three were most certainly wounded, for their frightful bellowing gave evidence that their pain was far greater than their anger. Paroxysms of rage burst through their cavern-like throats in a hurricane of cries and wailings that were almost human. It would really appear that these animals, themselves, so full of goodness, of reason and of justice,

were, at length, shocked at these odious aggressions of man, little comprehending that they, like other beasts, were doomed to submit to this periodic slaughter; they, whose nature was so gentle! they, who drank the blood of no creature, contenting themselves with the produce of the soil, the refreshing baths of the lake and the cool shade of the forest!

Beholding one of their number stretched lifeless upon the sand and a torrent of blood gushing from his ears, they no longer hearkened to the dictates of their native prudence; but became so many broad targets for Nizam's deadly aim. Oscillating their huge trunks and goring the gravelly plain with their tusks, they scorned the enemy and defied him for this ungenerous attack.

At the cry of their wounded sentinels, the elephants, occupying other points along the blockade, pushed forward to bring relief; and the tramp of the monsters, as they moved over the ground, was like the rumbling of an earthquake.

The scenery of this marvelous interior of Africa was now alive with a people in every way worthy of its grandeur. The sudden presence of these colossal forms was needed to animate this mountain of abysses, and the outskirts of these infinite forests traversed by the volcanic spine of the universe.\*

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\*I have here fallen into a serious geographical error, but I have no time for correction. It is Mount Lupata, not far distant, it is true, from the Virginia, which, upon the maps, is called *The Edge of the Universe*, or *The Backbone of the World*. The Lupata range courses northward, I believe, between lake Maravi and Mozambique. Did I make any preten-

Everything that Nizam had conjectured was confirmed by Neptunio's account.

At this moment, there were gathered upon the same mountain plat eighteen hunters; a number more than sufficient, on former expeditions, when their efforts were directed against solitary wanderers. On the present chase, however, things appeared to assume a totally different character. These giant quadrupeds, at present exiles from their own territory and despoiled of the cemetery of their ancestors, seemed to prefer war to the death, rather than to endure the toils and privations of a new migration.

Moreover, the intelligent mammoths had long since, perhaps, noticed the commercial features of these expeditions, from the fact that, at certain seasons, they happened, in the wilderness, across the corpses of their friends, which were horribly mangled beneath the proboscis and deprived of their tusks. So hateful an injustice, borne with a calculating indignation would, sooner or later, so shock this powerful people as to provoke them to form within their territory a defensive alliance against the common enemy.

Guided, as they surely are, by a marvelous instinct, these noble animals understood, clearly enough, that they must be content to count among their natural foes the lion and the tiger. These bore upon their fronts the marks of an implacable hatred, and darted from their flaming eyeballs the savage defiance which claimed and disputed the empire of the wilderness.

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tions to geographical science, I would venture to prove that, under different names, this *Backbone* traverses the entire length of the African continent, as the Apennine traverses Italy. Establishing this, I would rectify the error I just mentioned.

But what were the aims of this unknown animal in these parts, this fellow without a tail, without a mane, with no terror in his look, no strength, no courage; this insolent biped who kills an elephant at five hundred paces and flings his carcass to the vultures?

A usurpation of this character, opposed to all the instincts and to all the traditions of his family, the elephant would not long tolerate. Enough blood had been already shed to cry to the desert for vengeance. So often made to do battle in the stranger quarrels of European and Asiatic kings, the elephant would, one day, find himself roused to warlike action in the defense of his own domains, without being forced to bear upon his back, towers and hosts of archers.

The movement which now agitated the colossal troop, and gave a new direction to their maneuvers, was not lost upon the watchful Nizam. The look and attitude of the Indian betrayed signs of uneasiness. It is more than probable, however, that this did not spring from the nature of his present danger: one of so little moment could have no terrors for Nizam. The hunters, still in order of battle— their rifles in rest and their fingers upon the trigger, refrained from uttering a word or putting a question; they waited in silence for the orders of their chief, endeavoring to read in his eyes the deep agitation of his soul. Sir Edward, who was standing beside Nizam, rested his rifle upon the ground, and, putting his hand over the muzzle, remarked half to himself:

*"Too much game is the death of the hunter, says the old proverb. Eh! Nizam?"*

*"Sir Edward,"* replied the Indian with a gesture which

meant: you understand the situation; "Sir Edward, there is truth in the proverb; and if you could interpret, as I do, what is going on in the heads of these fellows, you would understand, how very much to the point it is; besides, I have been studying their movements for the last five minutes, and I see what they have determined upon. The more hardy and the taller are staring us straight in the face, provoking us, insulting us, without ever giving us a fair glimpse of their ears. The more cunning among them, after exposing themselves to our bullets during the first movement of their foolish rage, have sheltered their ears behind the rocks, and are now standing still. Yonder, too, around that bend from which the valley recedes towards the forest, I distinguish upon the sand, a number of long shadows, projecting from shapeless masses, endeavoring to screen themselves from observation. There are elephants there in ambush. But, notwithstanding their cleverness, they are ignorant that the long shadows, which they are casting in the sun, declare their whereabouts. The intention of these brutes is evident; they do not wish to shift their battle ground, and they will not, I am certain. It would require the artillery of Fort St. George, at Madras, to dislodge them from that hole. Sir Edward, you understand the difficulties of this position; let us now see how much alike our minds are upon what is expedient. What do you advise?"

"I would shoot down the very last one of them; and stock the ivory markets of Calcutta, Chandernagore and Hog-Lane at Canton; that is my advice. Is it not yours, Lorédan? You are one of the most clever hunters of central France and would make little boast of picking a wren."

from a pinetop. Would you not deem it excellent sport to send two balls, for pendants, into the ears of these antediluvian monsters?"

"I hope, too, that Nizam will give the command to fire upon them," said Lorédan. "There are three fortunes at our feet; we must pick them up. An occasion like this we shall never have again. For myself, I am fairly astonished at Nizam's delay; and if you leave me at this post, alone, I will assume the danger and gather the ivory."

"Monsieur de Gessin," replied Nizam with a smile full of meaning, "trust my experience, there is not an ounce of ivory to be gathered in that valley: the moment you would stoop to collect it, a huge proboscis would be protruded from behind one of those gray rocks, seize and hurl you towards the blue sky like a Chinese rocket. Suffer me to guide you in this matter, Monsieur de Gessin."

"No, sir! not at all! my valiant Nizam," answered Lorédan, becoming suddenly quite animated; "you will not move me from this spot. I have before me a mine of gold, and I shall not abandon it. Ask Sir Edward whether I am able, in honor, to reject the offer of a fortune which Providence here makes me. Your fears are that all the elephants within the tropics will hasten into this valley to wreak vengeance upon us for this slaughter. All the better! What you fear, I hope for with ardor! The booty pacing to and fro there below is not enough; I trust that the report of my rifle will resound throughout the length and breadth of this solitude, gathering the desired contingent of brutes from the four points of the compass. Retire, if such is your pleasure; I will not oppose you; but the desert is mine as well as yours, it is the property of the

first comer; it is my conquest; here I will plant the flag of my country; and enter upon the possession of my portion of the inheritance of Noah."

"Restrain yourself, Monsieur de Gessin," said Nizam with a beseeching gesture; "be calm, listen to the advice of experience, and . . ."

"Nizam, you are not in my secrets; some day, I will, perhaps, reveal them to you; meanwhile, mind you, I must, at every cost, amass a fortune, a fortune, mark me well! While it was impossible and beyond my reach, I maintained a hopeless silence and was mute with resignation. Now, all my energies are awakened; here my duty is clear; I will cling to this rock; I will not leave this place."

"My dear Lorédan," said Sir Edward in a tone of great gentleness, "your brain is overheated; put yourself under the control of cooler heads. Valiant Nizam thoroughly understands the nature of this sort of warfare; if, then, he sounds a retreat, don't you see, that it is our duty to follow blindly and without question?"

"Follow him, then, if you choose, Edward; when my honor needs a defense, you will amply vindicate it. If I am overwhelmed, or my project miscarry, you are able to testify that I did not shrink from my duty, from the first moment that chance indicated whither my course lay."

"It is that precisely which forces me to abandon all hope," replied Sir Edward, with an air of mystery. If you obstinately persist in continuing in this plan, *I have* imperious motives for getting out of it. . . . In any event," said he smiling, "I am, unlike you, a disciplined soldier; I follow my chief. In expeditions such as this one, everybody belongs to everybody else."

"You know, my friend, to whom I belong; have you forgotten it?"

"I have forgotten nothing, Lorédan; but you are exaggerating this good fortune; your hunter's dreams overstep the limits of the very skies."

"We shall see."

"You shall see nothing, Lorédan; you will pass a miserable night, that is all."

"I, long since, made my provisions against this night, Edward. I am not unprepared. I am not a novice to the situation. It was not a wandering caprice nor a youthful freak that led me, the other night, into the darkness of these dreary solitudes. I had a presentiment that my duty would, one day, place me at some perilous post, which would require nerves inured to a war with the gloom and treachery of these depths. Now I am sure of myself, as I said to Jonathan."

Nizam, who had withdrawn, a minute or more, to complete his mysterious observations, now placed himself in front of Lorédan, and said to him:

"Monsieur de Gessin, your European ideas of courage are not our ideas. With us savages, it is no disgrace to retire before an inevitable danger. From my study of these animals I am fully apprised of their concealed designs. I am responsible to Captain Jonathan, for the lives of eighteen persons; so long as I continue in his service, I will have a severe account to render. Besides, at this moment, I have, likewise, a duty to fulfill towards you, my honored masters, and towards my companions. Monsieur de Gessin has, I am aware, no orders to receive from me; *all the responsibility of his action rests with himself.* We

are losing time here which we can never repair. Night is coming on; in three hours, the sun will have sunk below the horizon. We shall find this mountain of abysses hard scaling. I understand what is waiting for me on the other side. Come on, let us quit this place."

"How, now, my gallant Nizam?" said Sir Edward, with a false gaiety in his expression which contrasted with the gravity of the Indian, "are you about to retire without giving these overgrown fabrics of ivory a parting salute!"

"Without another shot, Sir Edward, for, to-day, there is nothing to be gained from these brutes; believe me; do not offer them any further provocation."

Nizam ordered the hunters to withdraw. The Makidas, in charge of the provisions, left a plentiful supply for the needs of the obstinate young hunter, who could not be prevailed upon to retire from the field of battle. Sir Edward, who remained until the last, held out his hand to Lorédan, and with a touch of melancholy in his smile, said to him:

"You are, then, seriously resolved to continue upon the chase?"

Lorédan sat down upon a rock, holding the hand of his friend tightly within his own.

"Lorédan," added Sir Edward, "you are much astonished to see that I abandon you as I do; are you not?"

"I told you, Sir Edward, that in the interest of my honor, you obliged me by leaving me."

"For the last day or so, Lorédan, I have not been at my own disposal; I belonged to another man. . . ."

"To Nizam?"

"To Nizam! the idea, Lorédan!"

"Sir Edward, you have, I know, a terrible secret at the bottom of your heart. . . ."

"Lorédan, you will soon know all. . . . A secret is always the property of two. . . ."

"I respect your mystery, Edward, and will wait. . . . Love is at the bottom of it, I do not doubt. . . ."

"Love is everywhere, my friend. . . . Good-bye, Lorédan. The others are calling me. . . . Give me your hat, and you, take mine. . . ."

"Why this exchange, Edward? . . ."

"I do not wish to present myself before Elmina with this cactus' rent in my hat. . . ."

"Say it was done by a bullet. . . ."

"That's enough, Lorédan! and now farewell. . . ."

"One word more, Edward. . . ."

"Not another. . . ."

"It is for fair Rita. . . . Do you imagine that I could meet her again like a poltroon who fled at the first appearance of danger? There is French and Spanish blood in her young creole veins, and she will exult at the recital of what I have done; she will release me from her gratitude and reward me with her love."

"Farewell, Lorédan. . . ."

"You will see her before I will, Edward; tell her that her name was the last word which I pronounced when I left you."

"Once more, Lorédan, farewell; at a distance or near you, I will ever watch over you."

In a few moments the little caravan was lost among the rugged windings of the mountain passes.

For a long time, Lorédan's ears were filled with the

loud rumbling echoes of the bowlders, that dashed down the mountain side, from beneath the feet of the scaling hunters. A dead silence followed the last faint sound of the echo in the abyss, and declared that the crater of this extinct volcano had now but one solitary man for its inhabitant.

The words which Nizam used, as he was retiring, had impressed Lorédan :

*"Do not offer them any further provocation."*

The young French traveler had willingly undertaken to brave all the dangers of this mismanaged expedition, but he would have sacrificed all the ivory in creation, rather than, by any thoughtlessness, expose the lives of his companions. Accordingly, that he might allow the hunters to place a safe distance between themselves and their angry enemies, he decided to refrain from hostilities until the rising of the stars. He thought even, and with good reason, that his presence at the bottom of the gorge favored the retreat of Nizam ; for it disconcerted the elephants, and retained them in the neighborhood of their dead companion.

Unhappily for the sagacity of this thought, the brutes proved themselves more than a match for man in cleverness. Lorédan remarked among them a movement, not unlike the maneuver of pickets, gathering about the camp fire to distribute the watchword. With a solemn step and his ears, like two bucklers, drawn down over either side of his enormous head, the colossus, that appeared to be the officer in command, advanced to the base of the rocky peak upon which Lorédan was still seated.

Between the hunter and his game there was now but a *perpendicular descent* of thirty feet.

The majestic animal raised his trunk high into the air, and, with loud and noisy respirations, questioned the character of the atmosphere above him, like a sailor, in the midst of breakers, who probes the depth of the waters, upon which he is moving. Then, the elephant retreated cautiously, his front to the hunter, his trunk on high, his tusks horizontal, and his vulnerable parts always under cover from the enemy's fire. This bold recognizance ended, the entire squad drew off at an easy pace. Their departure, however, was too quiet not to conceal their hostile intentions. A moment later, that same stormy underground rumbling, reverberated among the peaks and caverns of this mountain gorge, which burst forth, at the battle of Heraclea, under the feet of the king of Epirus, as he bore down upon the Romans with his cavalry of elephants.

Two of these animals remained to watch the carcass. The giant shadows, cast in the sun by the bodies that were invisible around the bend in the little valley, also disappeared, leaving in their place, nothing but a dark cloud of dust. All these maneuvers gave an outlet and a definite direction to the workings of the human brain.

The first indications of that fortune which had so wrought upon the imagination of the young hunter, as to urge him to a determination which was more noble than it was reasonable, vanished with the last rays of the sun. His mine of ivory was dashing on, at a gallop, towards the southern woodlands. But two living colossi guarded the spot, and so well was their grizzly hue compounded with the ashy color of the soil, that it was difficult to distinguish between the fleshy and the rocky granite. The hope, how-

ever, of meeting the herd on its return held Lorédan at his post. It was probable enough that the elephant would come back to relieve their pickets, and render the honors of sepulture to their comrade, that he might be spared the ordinary insult of a most revolting mutilation.

This thought somewhat consoled Lorédan, whose splendid dream of ivory had disappeared in a cloud of dust. Night set in; but the torrents of flame poured down by the sun upon the top of this mountain of abysses continued, long after sunset, to surround the hunter with an artificial twilight.

It was but gradually that the deep shadows of the night extinguished the fiery brilliancy of the atmosphere. Luminous vapors might be seen floating over the brow of the darkening peak and along the verge of the precipice, while this valley of horrors, lighted up by the expiring fires of an African day and the growing brightness of the stars, seemed peopled with a host of infernal giants, vomited forth from the crater of the abyss. The low deep voices of the primeval desert rose up from the waters of the neighboring lakes, while, from the bosom of the bordering forests, the midnight growl greeted the hour of blood and destruction.

The night wind, laden with this awful and mournful harmony, hurled and dashed it against the upright sides of the mountain, into a thousand heart-breaking echoes which howled along the dark corridors of the air, as if every beast in these black wilds was following in hot pursuit. The center of Africa was like a volcano roaring with internal rumblings, before the explosion, which was to vomit forth into all the byways of mountain, forest and

valley, a living lava of grizzly monsters, with a bloody foam at their mouths and the brand of hell upon their savage fronts.

Our young hunter had thus far misunderstood the benefits of his apprenticeship. A night or two before, he had ventured along the outskirts of the desert. To-night, he was in the midst of the desert world, upon ground forbidden to man, and which, beneath the dark shadow of its gloomy nights, concealed a terror that paralysed human courage. An icy chill crept over his body, yet moist with the day's perspiration. In the fever of his nervous delirium, he, at times, imagined that, like a doomed gladiator, he was seated upon the lowermost tier of a great pagan amphitheater, waiting for the dawn to quench the thirst of a whole nation of spectators with his blood. Again, his wandering fancy led him back to the kiosk of flowers; there he beheld a youthful maiden, her smiling face upturned to the stars and her long wavy tresses mingling, in the rays of the lamplight, with the branching wall vine. He started with love and fright as he drew in the strong breath of the desert air, whose perfumed odors play, with equal freedom, through the streaming ringlets of the gentle girl as through the shaggy mane of the roaring lion.

Suddenly, a sound still more formidable than the savage concert within this African solitude pealed along the mountain crags, summoning up to the lone hunter his almost palsied energy. There was no doubting it; a terrific engagement was taking place between Nizam and his giant foe. Notwithstanding the distance, the firing, together with the thundering roar of the elephants, was distinctly audible. The dip of arms and the bellowing dead-

ened the multitudinous cry of the prowling monsters who were abroad in the darkness upon their errands of blood.

Lorédan started up, full of that courage with which the tumult of battle always animates a valiant breast. He would have cleared at a bound the mountain, abyss, plain and forest which separated him from the caravan; but one thought held him fast, as he made his first impulse forward. Upon the sonorous atmosphere of the desert, sounds the most distant were carried with their slightest vibrations from horizon to horizon. Reckoning, then, from the length of time that had elapsed since the departure of Nizam, the conflict was at a distance so remote that, along unknown paths, it would be fairly impossible to reach the scene of action before daybreak. He must pass an anxious night and wait for the sun, the eye of heaven, whose first glance fills the heart of the miserable with consolation.

Fixing his eyes upon that defile through the abysses along the mountain side which led to the summit, and stretching himself forward that he might better gather in the roar of the distant battle, Lorédan could distinguish the outline of an animated body upon a dark table rock, separated by a deep ravine, from the ledge upon which he was himself standing. The object was balancing itself over the abyss that went down between them, as if examining before clearing it.

From the graceful and terrible majesty of its undulations, and the strength of its rigid muscles after its mighty bound, it was as easy to recognize beneath the stars as in open sunlight, the lord of the feline race, come down from the mountain, attracted by the scent of fresh blood.

He stepped onward in the gloom with that prudent

courage which, without fear, sounds the depths of the darkness for dangers, ever ready, in the face of a hostile surprise, to throw himself into an attitude of full defiance.

He appeared to be familiar with this craggy pass, for whether he hurried or dropped his broad paw, with proud deliberation in his gait, he never hesitated upon his footing. But twenty paces from the platform upon which the hunter was standing as immovable as a statue, the lion suddenly halted, as if he had encountered a moving boulder upon the brink of a perpendicular gorge.

With a toss of stupefaction, he shook his enormous head; his mane bristled like a crest of serpents, and the flashing gold of his eyes illumined the rock upon which he was whetting his steely claws. The feline menace, a low, harsh growl issuing from his clenched teeth through the foam that dripped from his jaws, grew louder, as he continued, until it swelled out into the terrific roar of the African lion. It was the wail of a savage instinct roused against an unknown apparition, against a strange foe that would not fly before the lion, but seemed even prepared to give him battle with an insulting coolness.

The young hunter, after examining his rifle, had regained his calm and intrepidity: he took for target the broad face of the monster, as it shone brightly in the angry glare of its eyes. He fired twice. Like a flash, the lion leaped into the air, and his roaring was confounded with the prolonged echoes of the double report. Then, raising himself to his full height, he shook his head with his forepaws, as if to tear death out of it; finally, falling down upon the rock, he dragged himself towards his conqueror, and, trembling with furious convulsions, he

hurled his last piercing cry, together with his last drop of blood, full into the face of the hunter.

Following the last roar of the dying brute, Lorédan heard a human voice in the deep gorge at the foot of the mountain, calling him by name.

He leaped for joy as he recognized, before he saw, the young and intrepid Willy: he alone, could, at that hour, appear upon this theater of danger and horror. Willy, alone, like the eagle or the hawk, feared neither gorge nor beast, nor the midnight snares of the wilderness.

The most pleasant conjectures now wrought upon the mind of the hunter. There was no doubting it: the elephant Jemidar had carried Willy to the Virginia; the pretty Rita, alarmed at the frightful position of the troop, had despatched Willy to the aid of him whom she had chosen for her spouse.

The generous son of Jonathan, on horseback, over a desert of sixty miles, and followed by a reinforcement of savage Makidas, as swift as eagles, had hurried on with winged speed to his assistance.

Nizam had informed him that the young Frenchman was yet at the bottom of the Mountain of the Abysses, and Willy, in the name of Rita, had rushed forward to snatch him from the gulf, and lead him back to the paradise of his own home.

There were grounds for the greater part of these conjectures; we shall see where the error lay.

Willy leaped from rock to rock, like the spirit of the abyss; the rolling stones, grazed by his light tread as he hurried by on tip-toe, stood still; not an echo even accom-

panying the light bound of his shadowy body. He hurried by the carcass of the lion without deigning a look of surprise, and his hands, like two wings, fell, with his last leap, into those of Lorédan.

"All is well!" said he, without taking a minute to breathe. "By this time, our friends are safe. Nizam told me. I left him. I am here."

"A thousand thanks, dear Willy; yes, I understand you; you know the horrors of this wilderness; you guessed my position. I have the courage to say that I was afraid."

"You are as courageous as a lion, Lorédan. Come what will after our conversation, from this moment, I am your friend. Listen to me, my friend. I place my life in your hands, and am here to save yours. You have come here to find a fortune; you have avowed as much, and you cannot contradict yourself. . . ."

"The man who would conceal the truth, at the bottom of this pit, amid the solemnity of this night, and beneath the stars of heaven, were an infamous wretch. Willy, it is not, believe me, a vile motive which actuates me! I can, then, without a blush declare that Nizam spoke the truth."

"Lorédan, I trusted Nizam, and I am here. The fortune you seek is not here. You thought like a novice in speculation. True, if, alone, you had destroyed this troop of elephants, your desires would have been in great part satisfied, for the ivory of this region is equal to that of Bengal and Ceylon, and, thanks to our exchange system, we are yet in a way to gather profit from our other commodities; but your hunter's expectations were at fault. I am even prepared to say that the heated action of yesterday will render our hunting fruitless for a long time to

come. But, my dear Lorédan, even before Nizam had spoken to me, I knew that you were in quest of a fortune. That fortune, which some have promised you often enough, but which no one has yet given you, I now promise you, and will give you! Yes, Lorédan, I call on the stars of God to be my witness and the virginal sanctity of this wilderness; I swear it upon the ashes of my noble father asleep upon the banks of my sister's lake, this fortune will be yours if, in exchange, dear Lorédan, you give me life!"

"I! I give you life!" said Lorédan, with extraordinary emotion. "Explain yourself, Willy; whither must I follow you? Are you aware, in these African wilds, of some still more formidable defile in which your life will be in danger? . . . I shall precipitate myself into its depths before morning. . . ."

"Lorédan," said Willy, interrupting his last sentence with a kind gesture, "Lorédan, I thank you. It is no common danger that menaces my life. . . ."

"Willy," said Lorédan, with a solemn tone, "you saved my life on the islet of the Limpid Stream; you tendered to me the hospitality of a brother; you offered me a fortune, but this moment; well then! I swear to you upon the head of my father, if he is living, by his ashes, if he is dead, I swear to grant you, in recompense, anything that you shall ask me; my life even is yours!"

Willy looked at the stars; and, casting his eyes upon the ground, took Lorédan by the hand.

"Lorédan," he said, "I love your sister Rita; she has not rejected my vows, and I ask her of you, her only relation within this desert."

Of all the emotions experienced upon this chase, Loré-

dan now felt the most terrible; the night concealed the pallor of his countenance and the convulsive tremor that shook his frame: beneath the sunlight, Lorédan would have betrayed himself. Willy, his eyes upon the ground, awaited, in Lorédan's answer, for life or death.

A silence of a few instants interrupted the conversation.

Around them, mountain, valley and woodland kept up one continuous howl, yet these formidable sounds caused no emotion in the breasts of the two hunters: the stormy tumult of their thoughts overruled the wild uproar of this African night. Love's cry is louder than the lion's roar.

Lorédan was thunderstruck. As he reeled under the bolt, he leaned his body upon the barrel of his rifle, and his soul upon a filial remembrance: his paralyzed lips made a spasmodic effort to utter some unintelligible words, and to prepare the firm and decided answer which the situation called for.

The unhappy young man cast a rapid glance about him upon the vigorous nature around, and he felt that he gathered some strength from the mountain, the forest, the ocean and the stars of heaven. Catching his rising thought, he answered somewhat as follows:

"Willy, you must excuse my astonishment. Your request is a surprise; I was altogether unprepared for it. After a terrible day, and a still more terrible night, I experience such a weakness of the brain that my soul seems to be in the world of dreams. What an hour, Willy, and what a place you have chosen for a conversation like this!"

"But circumstances, it seems to me, forced me to speak as I have. . . . They told me that you had rashly exposed

yourself, led by I don't know what thought of an imaginary fortune, to all the dangers of the mountain and the night; I immediately left Nizam and our hunters in the Lake of the Hawks, in the midst of marshes inaccessible to elephants, and flew to your assistance, to offer you that for which you are hopelessly seeking here. With your rash ideas, could I have dragged you from this abyss, if I did not break matters to you, as I did? You must understand my temper, Lorédan. Circumlocution and cunning are unknown to me. I am a savage whom artifice has not yet civilized. When I tell you that I hold a fortune in my hands, you must know that I am telling you a pure truth: you must understand, too, that I do not come here to recompense you with gifts for your consent to my marriage with your sister. That were an odious traffic, unworthy of you and degrading to me; and, above all, an indignity to that angel of beauty who has given life to the tomb of my solitude! . . ."

"Willy," said Lorédan, painfully drawing the syllables from the depths of his breast, "Willy, I fully rely upon your promise. . . . You will give me what you promise. . . . If I accept it. . . . But take me back to the house. . . . Give me a few hours of reflection. . . . Night darkens the soul as well as the body. . . . Wait until to-morrow. . . . The sun will give light to the soul as well as to the eyes."

"Lorédan . . . follow your simple impulse. . . . Do you need counsel from . . . from another to give your consent to the marriage of your sister? . . . Here, and at this hour, your will is your own. . . . It will not, probably, belong to you to-morrow. . . ."

"Willy, I think you refer to Sir Edward. . . . You are

wrong, Willy. . . . When I believe that I should obey a good inspiration, I take counsel with nobody, not even with my best friend."

Willy preserved a very significant silence. He had a settled opinion about Sir Edward; he did not wish to contend with Lorédan, and he kept his conviction to himself.

The young Frenchman put a different interpretation upon Willy's gloomy silence; accordingly, after a short interruption, he added :

"Willy, I understand you; you are astonished, doubtless, that I expostulate when I should be mindful of the oath which I swore to you. I promised to give you my life if you asked it; you ask me for much less, and I hesitate: this must, truly, look singular. I, therefore, owe you an explanation. You ask Rita in marriage from me. . . . My rights over this young lady . . . here, in this desert, are very contestable. . . . I am not her father . . . and even at the price of a fortune, I would not do violence to the will of a sister. . . . My life is my own, I can give it to whomsoever asks it, but . . ."

"Permit me to interrupt you, Lorédan," said Willy with a mild gesture and a voice full of sweetness: "If I make this digression in your presence, I am authorized."

"Authorized!" said Lorédan, with the strangest emphasis; "and by whom are you authorized?"

"Listen to me, Lorédan, and believe me that your brotherly susceptibilities have nothing at which to grow alarmed. You know with what rapidity our elephant, Jemidar, bore me home, yesterday. I was anxious to conceal my arrival from the family and household: but I

was obliged to call out my savages; I needed fifty young Makidas as a re-enforcement. I could not summon these without creating a stir. The danger was pressing; every minute lost was irreparable. At the moment I was mounting my horse outside the enclosure of the Virginia, your sister came out with my sister Elmina.

"The parting scene was brief, but heartrending. It was only the most imperious of duties that forced me to close my eyes upon the anguish of these two young girls. Miss Rita, not daring to hold me by force with her own hands, made use of the embraces of my sister, while she mingled her tears with those of Elmina. It seemed to me that I had two sisters, and that you were my brother, for Elmina pronounced no name but yours, and Rita uttered none but mine.

"My troop of hunters were already a mile ahead of me. We were, all three, under the trees along the avenue; my left hand was on my horse's mane, my right again waved my adieux; then it was that a voice, which spoke to me, hushed the warbling in the tree-tops:

"I am unable to dispose of myself without his consent; I do not belong to myself; but *he* is good and generous! tell him that a single word from him will ensure your happiness and mine.'

"We said much in a few brief words; these were the last words uttered; they again re-echo in my soul, and I now deposit them in your heart."

The man who, enfeebled and without defense, meets, in the midst of the night and in the depths of the forest, with a gigantic assassin, who clutches him in his invincible grasp, and, to prolong the agony of his victim, fixes upon

him a stare of bitter irony, which is reflected in the polished steel of his poignard, this man only is capable of understanding the secrets of that moral torture which Willy, unwittingly, inflicted upon Lorédan.

It is the privilege of love to take a man, young, strong and sound in body and mind, and cause him to undergo, at once, every imaginable species of torment, not by the aid of a vast arsenal of tortures and troops of executioners, but by means of a single word, which to the rest of the world is of the most paltry insignificance. This word, for that ardent soul and that young body, is a dagger, a fire-brand, burning lava, a vulture's beak, a damned flame, and an iron collar reddened in the grate of hell.

Such was the agony of the young hunter. Erect and triumphant upon his craggy pedestal, between the dead bodies of two monsters of the wilderness, he felt himself dying from the mortal stab of a word, aimed at his heart by a friend.

As he half opened his mouth to respire the reviving perfumes of the night, this question escaped his lips:

"Willy, do you love Rita?"

The face of the savage son of Jonathan glowed beneath the stars, and a flash of joy shot from his dazzling green eyes, which, even in the dusk of night, gleamed like two sun spangles upon a background of water, drops from the Indian ocean.

"You ask me whether I love her!" said he, and a rich musical voice issued from that very breast within which there lay smothered the hiss of the serpent and the roar of the lion. "It seems to me I loved her before I knew her; I continued to love her, from the moment I first saw

her upon the little island in the river. At one time, I loved my sister Elmina well, and I felt, on seeing the young shipwrecked maiden, that I was able to love still another woman, but with other affections, as sweet, although stormy. Before her arrival, I was the monarch of this African world, created for me by my father; I possessed woods, lakes, mountains, flocks, and treasures unknown to all but myself. Alas! I found myself poor in the midst of this abundance; one good was wanting among all these blessings, one voice was unheard among all these voices, one ray never shed its light with the thousand rays that illumined my life in the wilderness. Often, at evening, when the sun had gone down and the thoughts of the night began to arise in the mind of the savage, my sister Elmina leaning upon my arm, her eyes and mine wandering across opposite horizons, the long hours of the evening died away in a mournful silence, and we knew not what it was that saddened us. To-day, I feel that my solitude is peopled, my wilderness is alive, my forest trees speak to me again, my stars send forth their rays, my flowers breathe their perfume; I feel that the world of my father is complete and that the path across the horizon has nothing more to bring to my soul. . . . Do you still ask me whether I love your sister?"



## CHAPTER XIV

## THE RETURN FROM THE CHASE.

**L**ORÉDAN violently removed his hand from his bosom' as if tearing a sulphur tunic from his breast, and, with Willy's last words, appeared to form some powerful determination.

"Yes," he said with a voice in which every note in the accent of despair was fearfully audible, "yes, you do love this young girl; I see it, I feel it, for your soul has passed into my own. The consent which you seek in her name, I grant you. If I exercise any rights over her, I now renounce them all. This woman is henceforth yours."

Willy uttered one of those cries which the predestined alone will raise at the gates of paradise.

"Now," added Lorédan in a natural tone, "now, Willy, let me remind you of your promise. Suspend your judgment of me, I conjure you, for I must appear to you much absorbed, indeed, by my ambitious thoughts of fortune. When you see me so desperate in the pursuit of riches, *even at this hour and in this place*, you will, I trust, be

lieve that my aim is a noble one, worthy alike of you and of me."

Willy grasped the hand of Lorédan and made no other answer than a very significant gesture. The young American savage appeared now to enter upon another order of ideas. He moved forward until he reached the last sharp line bounding his rocky platform. His eagle eye, piercing the deep windings of the valley below him, probed every mystery hidden in its depths, as truly as if they were lighted up by the noonday sun.

Lorédan saw him descend to the ruined mound, with an assurance in his step and an agility in his motions which clearly told his perfect acquaintance with the ground upon which he was acting.

At the approach of Willy, the cumbersome masses on guard over the carcass in the plain moved within the wide and deep trenches which served them for shelter against a distant fire.

The hunter stepped towards them, without the slightest manifestation of fear. His single precaution was to select the smallest and sharpest points upon which to rest his foot, always holding himself beyond the reach of the longest trunk and calculating every measurement with a quick, unerring glance.

Notwithstanding the tempest that tossed within his own brain, Lorédan feverishly followed the airy transit of his companion, to understand the object of his strange promenade. For a moment, he forgot his misery, to follow every step, every movement, the very breathing of Willy, and to hold himself prepared to fly to his help when danger befell him.

The attitude, however, of the daring young Jonathan quieted all alarm. He could not have been more self-possessed upon any walk in the Zoological Garden at Cape-town, leading to a den of captive elephants.

When within half range of a pistol, he stopped in front of the trenches occupied by the monsters. Here, he assumed an easy and inoffensive position, and, save his easy pose, the sole observer of his motions could see no more.

A double flash, and the hunter was enveloped in two columns of dense smoke. Two deafening roars followed, as if the clefts in the hillside gave forth the dying howls of a den of lions writhing amid the tortures of subterranean fires.

Willy had accomplished his feat with that success which never fails to attend energy and courage, and, a moment later, Lorédan beheld him calm and erect at his side.

"There is not a minute to lose; follow me, Lorédan."

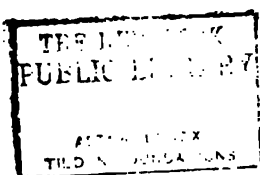
And he began to scale the mountain by paths unknown even to Nizam, never halting until he had gained the summit, where he stopped to allow his companion time to breathe.

"I wounded both of them," said Willy to Lorédan; "they will bellow a long while yet before their lives will issue through the narrow passages I opened for them. . . . My fire must surely take effect; I know my beasts too well. . . . Listen to the quaking of the earth, over in that direction. . . . It is the herd recrossing the plain to the aid of their disabled sentries. . . . Their bellowing, you perceive, was heard. . . . There is nothing so delicate as the thick ears of these monsters, and nothing so nimble as their big



ELMINA.

(From HENDRICKS PHOTO, CALOUTTA)



feet. . . . Let us lie down ; don't breathe, nor utter a word : they will hear us as they pass."

After lying in this position, motionless and silent, for half an hour, Willy got up and made a sign to his companion.

They took the road down the mountain, directing their course eastward, along tortuous paths, which had all the appearance of miniature valleys, whose steep borders were ledges of jutting rocks.

Within a few a paces of the open plain, Willy threw down a wall of heavy stone which served as a door to the entrance of a cave, and called aloud : *Spark !*

Spark, Willy's horse, leaped out into the valley, shaking his long mane and looking wildly towards the plain. Willy vaulted upon his back, and Lorédan got up behind him. Without word or spur, the lightfooted Spark plunged forward over brier and bramble, in the direction of the Lake of the Hawks.

Through the double obscurity of the night and of my narrative, the reader will probably have guessed that Nizam, Sir Edward and the other hunters had had the good fortune and happiness of reaching the Lake of the Hawks, the evening previous, and that, before attacked by the elephants, they had time to establish themselves upon an island situated in the center of a deep morass.

Nizam, who, like an experienced general, always knew where to provide a safe asylum in the event of a disastrous retreat, understood the full advantage of the position he occupied upon this island. The moisture of the soil was so great that, if his cumbersome enemy pushed on over it, he would be irrecoverably mired in mud. Guessing their

designs, after his abortive attack upon them, at the foot of the Mountain of the Abysses, Nizam had calculated the time and distance with great exactness, that he might beat a retreat at an opportune moment.

Scarcely had the hunters reached the island, after swimming across a somewhat deep and marshy arm of the lake, than Willy and his Makidas joined them with a powerful re-enforcement.

The elephants, in their turn, lost no time in appearing upon the lake shore and sounding the water with their trunks before attempting a passage. Their sagacity soon understood that a passage by water was impracticable for them. It was then that Nizam opened fire upon them along the whole front, to intimidate his enemy and force him to beat a retreat at the moment he was thwarted in his plans of vengeance. The elephants replied with a deafening roar, but they obstinately continued to guard the southern bank, that they might cut off a return to the Virginia. Nizam and Sir Edward had, however, resolved to swim to the eastern bank, conceal themselves in the forest and climb into the tall trees, whose branches were woven into one another, over a length of nine miles. Along this air line of forest vegetation, at a uniform height of ten feet above the trunks of their pursuers, they were determined to reach the plantation, keeping up a constant fire upon the elephants, if they followed in warm pursuit, even to the vicinity of the Virginia. This project, however, they were not at liberty to put into execution, since Willy, on resuming the command, ordered them to continue in their present position until his return.

Nizam, who heard either report from Willy's pistol, as

it was repeated by the mountain echoes, leaped with exultation as he caught his master's idea. The distant bellowing of the wounded sentries followed fast upon the discharge, and the besieging host destroyed their new blockade to tramp off, at the pitiful appeal of the two sentinels that had been detailed, to the farther limits of the horizon.

It was upon this exactly that Willy had reckoned and which he had contrived, with the knowledge of a man who understands the disposition and habits of his savage foe.

In brief, Nizam and the savages raised a shout of joy, when they heard, upon the eastern shore, a long low murmur that would have terrified a lion.

Willy rode into the camp with Lorédan. The entire detachment immediately recrossed the arm of the lake, and as soon as they again reached firm footing took the road home.

Willy dismounted and said to Neptunio:

"Give Spark a loose rein and speed to the Virginia, like a bird. Announce our arrival to Captain Jonathan, and drive Jemidar into the vineyard, back of the house."

By the time their master had uttered his last command, Neptunio and Spark were lost to view.

Willy then reserved four of his most intrepid hunters, with orders to draw up the rear, and, should the enemy again put in an appearance, to sound an immediate alarm. Finally, approaching Lorédan, he whispered in his ear:

"Do not breathe a syllable of what has passed between us!"

The young Frenchman bowed his head to signify his acquiescence.

Sir Edward walked on, ahead of all the others, in the hope that Willy, after disposing of his followers, would let him know whether the war between them was to continue or whether there was peace. When he had taken his own place at the head of the party, young Jonathan offered his hand to Sir Edward, and asked him :

"Did you hear my last command to Neptunio?"

"I did, Master Willy," answered Sir Edward in a calm tone.

"Did you understand the bearing of the order?"

"Master Willy, I confess that, for the last two days, I have been exclusively occupied in guessing riddles, and that now my cleverness has need of a little repose."

"Sir Edward," said Willy, shaking his hand, "yesterday morning, you discharged both balls almost into the ear of Jemidar. While he was carrying me home, I saw two streams of blood flowing down his neck. You will understand, then, that the animal must be much enraged against you; hence I will have him secured within the lesser enclosure."

"I thank you for your precaution, Master Willy. Your Jemidar would then, recognize me, wasted as I am by water, briers, hunger, fire and want of sleep?"

"He would know you twenty years from now, Sir Edward."

"The expedition, then, has brought me but a change of enemy; supposing that you have re-admitted me to your friendship?"

"You shall be my friend in life and death!"

"Well, then, Master Willy, will you explain the extravagant notion . . . ."

"Sir Edward, let us adjourn that topic . . . there is something which never speaks and yet explains everything."

"What do you call that thing, Master Willy?"

"Time."

"More riddles; very good, indeed."

Nizam had fallen behind, to question Lorédan upon his adventures of the night. He now joined Willy at the head of the party, and Sir Edward, shaking Willy's hand in a cordial manner, retired to walk with Lorédan.

"Did you remark, my friend," said Sir Edward, "that I gave you a cold reception on your return?"

"Not particularly, Edward."

"Well, in fact, I did preserve a certain distance with you. And I think I had reason for my conduct. Yesterday, I made every effort my eloquence was capable of to root that notion of ivory out of your head. Your heart was set upon a plan which would have procured you nothing but a blow of an elephant's snout across the nose. Notwithstanding my pleading, you would have your own way. Later on, this young barbarian, Willy, comes around and whips you out of yonder pit in a twinkling. You see, Lorédan, that I had some grounds for offense at your conduct: friends are sometimes as jealous as lovers."

"You were right, Edward . . . I should have listened to you . . . I was not in my normal state . . . The sun had heated my brain . . . I was dreaming awake . . . When Willy came, the freshness of the evening . . ."

"That will do, Lorédan; nothing appeases me more readily than the introduction to an excuse: ordinarily, it gets stale towards the end."

"Your tone is very mysterious, Edward . . . ."

"Mine! Probably it was but your own echo that startled you . . . . My word of honor for it, during the last few days we have been chasing riddles . . . . Time will explain all, as the other one said . . . . And yet, Lorédan, the life we are leading is admirable . . . . Speak to me of a life after this fashion! . . . . At this hour, deputy Atwood is wheezing out a two volume speech, in the House of Commons; the audience is asleep. Sir Robert Peel is entering his tomb in Parliament street; the Duke of Devonshire is haranguing his statuary. My friend, Parker, the millionaire, is closing his game of whist at the Reform Club, in tears over the everlasting absence of trumps. The Duke of Northumberland is getting up a fox hunt over four feet of snow. All these folks would be ready to fly in your face, with a thousand and one proofs, if you dared to deny, that they are actually alive . . . . Lorédan, life is here, in the midst of this burning drama. In this new world, in which we carry with us our passions, our quarrels, our anguish, our loves and our drunkenness, across a new continent which trembles beneath our naked feet, and whose riches nowhere exist except for our sakes . . . . Why, you shake your head, Lorédan? . . . . Perhaps you rather fancy what they call the life of a citizen, the life people lead in a comedy. Passions regulated to the hour; a well-bred rival who causes you a sleepless night, once a month; a father who is unwilling to surrender his daughter, because her lover has *crooked notions* in politics; a domestic who betrays his trust for a purse of gold; an Abigail meddling in what does not concern her; then, *the happy denouement*, with an affected parent and a

notary in a black gown. Oh! real life! what an amusing thing! I would not part with my last two nights for a century of a life that would wear away in showers of gold between London and Westminster bridges."

"Thank God! there is His sun rising;" said Lorédan, his hands joined as in mental prayer.

The waking light peering up over the horizon illumined the long avenues of ancient trees, and had already betrayed upon the white faces of the Europeans a secret emotion, which had hitherto been veiled in darkness.

With his tall, slender and supple form, his haughty gait, his pale face blackened with powder, the curls of his black hair pasted to his forehead and temples with a cement of dust and perspiration, Willy looked like a blasted archangel leading on the powers of earth in rebellion against Heaven.

Edward, with that proud feature stamped upon his expression, which is the beauty of manhood, his attire in rags and bespattered with the lake mire, looked the image of an unfortunate monarch retreating from a lost battle, but still bearing upon his brow that unalterable calm, which is the virtue of great souls.

The infernal genius of despair seemed to have stamped his features upon Lorédan. Suicide, one would say, had driven this young man to the depths of the water, and the saving hand that preserved his life had not effaced from his features the fatal marks of his incurable sadness.

Nizam alone was the same; he was not returning, he was just setting out. His Indian body, a compound of bronze and lion's blood, from head to foot, showed no signs of weariness. His large black eyes, fixed upon the

arching foliage of the tall trees, appeared to be studying a past history and conversing with heroes of another age, another nature and another heaven.

When the column had reached the top of the Red Mountain, Willy ordered a salute to be fired to the distant banner of the Virginia, and Nizam, the unwearied hunter, sang Elmina's favorite, *The Maiden of Golconda*.

With the last stanza, the hunters entered the shadow of the tall trees. All private conversation ceased. The departure and return of travelers is always silent. When they set out, they are thinking of what they are quitting; at their return, of what they are to meet again. There is a good deal of sadness in these two acts of a wandering life. At two miles from the Virginia, Willy and Nizam quickened their pace; they saw Captain Jonathan, who, with a small escort, had come out to meet his hunters.

"Edward," said Lorédan, getting up close to his friend, "either my eyes deceive me, or I see women in Jonathan's escort."

"Your eyes deceive you, my friend; it is a mirage of love which will vanish presently. The young ladies of the house have too nice a sense of propriety to assist at the arrival of sixty hunters in our desperate guise. The beautiful brunette and the charming blonde will not, I am sure, come down until late in the evening. You and I need some such delay, do we not?"

"Why so, Edward?" asked Lorédan, with a horrified expression.

"That's a pretty question! To readjust our toilets. Do you imagine that we are in ball dress, Lorédan?"

"I thought you had solved the riddles, and were keeping the key to yourself."

"Lorédan, we must sleep to-day ; we'll get up this evening."

The hunters gathered around Jonathan, who warmly congratulated all of them.

Sir Edward and Lorédan were loaded with eulogiums by the old man of the Virginia, and there was between them a warm and long shaking of hands.

Through the glades of the tamarinds and the boobabs, they could now catch a glimpse of the Chinese roof with its cascades of silver and gold flowers falling down over the notched cornice, around the kiosk of Elmina.



## CHAPTER XV

## MARRIAGE AND CHESS.

IT was the hour of the equinoctial *siesta*.

All labors upon the plantation were suspended; domestics of every shade had fallen asleep upon the bank of some little rivulet, or beneath tents of silent green. Hill and woodland, wrapt in the warm embrace of the noon-day sun, were as still as death; not the chirp of an insect, not a winged note disturbed the quiet of the foliage.

Nature was sleeping in fire.

In the great hall of the mansion, a delicious freshness radiated from the watery sprays and tiny fountains that shot up around the apartment.

After a few hours' repose, Sir Edward decked himself out in the jaunty finery of the young swell of the tropics, and proceeded to the sitting room to join Captain Jonathan, who, for want of a more sensible companion, was playing chess with *Jester*, his favorite monkey.

The questions and answers usual after a heated expedi-

tion full of dangers and fatigue, gone through, the conversation turned upon personal topics.

"You and I are the only folks awake, around the house, at this hour," said Jonathan. "Our young women passed a cruel night, thinking of their brothers. I tried, as well as I was able, to reassure them, but I addressed imaginations too much wrought upon for comfort of any kind. Although she has often witnessed the departure of Willy upon similar expeditions, the fact is that I have never seen Elmina so ill at ease. I am as much attached to my dear nephew as his sister is; but were I told that Willy was beset by every beast in the African wilderness, at the foot of that gray crest, to which his father alone dared to venture, I would not entertain the slightest apprehension. If Willy cannot reach home upon the firm earth, he will hop home, like a bird, through the tops of the endless forest trees. I can understand why Miss Rita should feel disquieted; she never witnessed her brother, M. Lorédan de Gessin, engaged in the perils of such a chase. I cannot, however, comprehend what should have caused Elmina so great a disturbance. However, this fever of fear will soon grow calm. Nizam, the family physician, has prescribed for our young and pretty patients. They will be convalescent this evening and in excellent health to-morrow; trust his Indian art for that."

"Captain Jonathan," said Sir Edward, seating himself in front of the heavy mahogany chess table, "I missed you very much the past few days at our bivouacs among the mimosas and by the lake. We could have played a number of very enjoyable games. Last year, on a journey from Calcutta to Lahore, I played with my palanquin

bearers at every relay. It was charming; I made four hundred leagues and hardly remarked the distance. We would draw sixty-four squares upon the sand, and for *pieces*, employed variously tinted flint pebbles, which we gathered along the banks of the Ganges. You understand?"

"Perfectly, Sir Edward; I would have given a good deal for one of your palanquin bearers, during the last few days. It was impossible to prevail upon Elmina to move a pawn against me. And I am ashamed to confess that I have entirely forgotten M. de La Bourdonnais' beautiful problem, which you were so kind as to rehearse for me, the evening you left for the chase. And Elmina, the silly thing, was unwilling to lend me even a suggestion."

"There is nothing surprising in that, Captain Jonathan. This admirable problem, the masterpiece of the genius of combination, and one which none but Philidor, Deschappelles or La Bourdonnais could have devised, is remarkable for the ease with which it escapes the memory. We will play it together, Captain Jonathan, and you will write down the moves as we advance."

"Good! the idea is a capital one, Sir Edward."

"This was my plan the other evening, but you were too busily engaged with the chase."

"May the devil caress these elephants!" said Jonathan, getting pencil and paper, while Sir Edward set up the pieces. "They're sorcerers. At other times, you would have overtaken with them, one after another, at a reasonable distance . . ."

"Very much, I suppose, as if formerly you had met with spatterings only from the great central herd . . ."

"Just so, Sir Edward!"

"Whereas now, Captain, the elephants have formed themselves into a federal republic, and are in chase of the hunters."

"The thing is simply ruinous for us, Sir Edward; we must abandon the ivory trade; this is disheartening! As for myself, I am content with little and am not greatly concerned over the remnant of my existence. But here are my nephew and niece; I must not refrain from giving them a thought. They are orphans, without fortune, who may, when I am dead, grow tired of their wild life, and my testament will not put them in possession of a single dollar . . . ."

"There is no cause for discouragement, Captain; the elephants will, perhaps, return to their old ways. Federal republics do not live long. The very first ambition that is thwarted will dissolve the boasted union . . . . Now, Captain, it is my *move* . . . . Just one word. You take the *blacks*; I, the *whites* . . . . I'm La Bourdonnais and you the world's champion, who challenges me. So far, then, we understand each other. This, now, is my first move.—'My queen's *pawn*, to queen's fourth.—Your queen's pawn occupies his corresponding square.—My queen's *bishop's* pawn, to bishop's fourth.—Your black pawn takes mine.—My king's pawn, to king's third, upon which black moves his king's pawn to king's fourth.'"

"Sir Edward! that is what I call a splendid *gambit*."

"Captain, the gambit is nothing; the miracle, as you are aware, is in the last nine moves . . . . Let us go on . . . . Isn't that Duke roaring? He hears us moving these pieces, and thinks that Miss Elmina is in the room. What a nice ear he has!"

"Poor fellow! he has not seen Elmina for the last two days!"

"One day later than myself, Captain; I can understand his grief.—' My king's bishop moves three squares to his left, taking your black pawn.—Black's king's pawn captures the *white lady's* pawn.—White's *king's* pawn removes black's pawn.—Your king's *knight* occupies a position two squares in front of his bishop.—My queen's knight moves to queen's bishop's third.—Your king's bishop, to the square before his king.—White now places his king's knight upon his king's bishop's third.—Black *castles*.—White moves queen's bishop to king's third.—Your queen's bishop's pawn, to bishop's third.—White's king's *elephant's* pawn advances a square.'\*

"*A propos* of the elephant, Captain, Jemidar is at enmity with me until death. I'm just from a visit to him, made at an upper casement, six feet above the reach of his proboscis; I saluted him with deep respect, and all the honor due to his exalted character; but there is nothing I can do to disarm him. He met my friendly advances with a deep low groan, like the Neapolitan solfatara, and while he was loosening a huge stone, I saw fit to retire, lest the fellow should pelt me to death."

"My dear Sir Edward, your rifle balls will be no easy matter for Jemidar to forgive. Willy told me of your exploit; you acted like a hero, you and your friend, M. de Gessin. Willy's report of your conduct is enthusiastic. I find myself at a loss how to acknowledge this double obligation, and I shall ever be mindful of the devotedness

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\*Indian players call the *castles*, *elephants*.

with which you hurried to the succor of my nephew . . . ."

"Well, Captain Jonathan, what we did was a simple thing: duty is not a virtue . . . . Can I, however, hope that we will pacify the anger of Jemidar?"

"Elmina alone can reconcile you."

"What an adorable girl! . . . . Do you believe it, Captain, that throughout the entire chase I sought the rock or tree which your hardy brother ornamented with the name of Miss Elmina?"

"Ah! your line of march did not lie in that direction, Sir Edward! My brother cut his daughter's name at the foot of that gray peak, which towers aloft over the ancient realms of the elephant."

"Some day or other I hope to write my own name in the same place.—'The black queen's knight occupies the square before his queen.—The white king's bishop retires to queen's knight's third.—Black's queen's knight, to his third.—White castles.—Black's king's knight removes to queen's fourth.—The white queen's elephant's pawn forward, two squares.—The black queen's elephant's pawn makes the same move.—I was just thinking, Captain, that Miss Elmina must be provoked at me, for wounding her Jemidar."

"Miss Elmina retains a sense of justice; she is, on the contrary, very thankful for your motive; you wounded her Jemidar, but it was to save Willy."

"Miss Elmina is, I perceive, a young lady of untold perfection; happy he whom she will honor with her friendship!"

"Poor niece; what friends can she possess here in the desert! . . . . Yourself, Sir Edward, wedded, as you are, to

a life of wandering, could you bring yourself to linger a couple of months in the midst of my family? . . . .”

“Captain, it is difficult to discover my intentions when I reserve them to myself . . . . There are sentiments which I love to cherish within the depths of my soul, and I am as fearful as a child to expose them to the sunlight. I am made that way. To give you an instance, had I a mind to sue for the hand of a young lady to her father, brother or uncle, I should hesitate to urge my request, until they had fairly guessed what I wanted.—‘The white king’s knight, to the fifth square in front of his king: to the left, not to the right.—Black places his queen’s bishop on his king’s third; black’s king’s bishop’s pawn, to his bishop’s third.—The white queen removes to king’s second.—Black’s king’s bishop’s pawn, to king’s bishop’s fifth.—The white queen’s bishop, threatened by the pawn, retires a square.—The black queen occupies the king’s square.—The white queen’s elephant goes to the king’s square.—The black queen’s bishop retires a square, in front of the elephant.’—Captain Jonathan, now cry, a miracle! and exclaim, with that great bonze: *Vishnu has become incarnate, the eleventh time, in La Bourdonnais!* We are at the decisive move. When he had reached this point, La Bourdonnais bent his enormous head over the chess table, and immediately raising it, scanned the assembly with a pair of half-closed eyes, that glistened like two sparks of malice and genius.

“‘There is something unusual about to happen,’ remarked his friends. And yet there was nothing wonderful in his lead. Every piece was still upon the board, four pawns only suffering by the *gambit*. La Bourdonnais

places 'his white queen upon the king's fourth square: his adversary moves his king's knight's pawn one square.— La Bourdonnais removes the black king's bishop's pawn with his queen's bishop; his adversary takes the white bishop with his knight; and La Bourdonnais, suppressing a laugh, shuffled his arms upon the table, and, with a careless and nasal utterance, said:

"'Check-mate in nine moves.'"

"Marvelous, Sir Edward."

"Mark well that these nine meant eighteen, for we must include the adversary's moves."

"It is simply confounding! Yes, indeed, Sir Edward, the old bonze was perfectly correct."

"The same bonze composed a volume of commentaries upon the nine moves which follow. This will be, henceforth, the sole pleasure with which life can furnish him. The hours which remain to him after his ministry upon the Blue God, the wise old Indian passes in sweet meditation upon these nine moves."

"Are you acquainted with his commentary, Sir Edward?"

"Am I acquainted with it! I have myself written another volume upon the Indian's commentary. When I grow weary, I draw a chess-board, and wear off my *ennui*, thinking of these nine moves. They are a fathomless mine. Algebra is incapable of furnishing a problem which will afford the same amount of pastime. The eve of our hunt, there was a multitude of things claiming your attention; we were in a hurry to finish the problem, and I was not, therefore, at liberty to speak to you of the marvelous character of this fabulous

*mate*. I am supplying that omission to-day. Imagine that you see La Bourdonnais, at every move, forcing his adversary's game, and that, in the end, black, withersoever he turns, stands face to face with a mate. Your countenance, Captain, is growing cheerful. Well, I declare, if this affords you so evident a pleasure, let us, like the bonze, spend our days over this mate. You will not find the three-fourths of the race with a plaything as amusing as this. That bonze is the sagest old fool on earth."

"Oh! I very well comprehend his folly, Sir Edward; I'm an old man, and I passed my young days looking at fools in America. But you are yet too young, Sir Edward, to sacrifice your spare moments to a fancy for chess . . ."

"You don't understand me, Captain Jonathan; I'm a man of method and great sameness . . ."

"You, Sir Edward! you, the citizen of the world! who call yourself the inspector of nations and the wandering Christian!"

"Because I'm looking for a state of life, Captain. Let me happen upon a suitable mode of existence, and you will, yourself, see with what alacrity I will resign my commission of inspector of nations."

"Do you favor marriage, Sir Edward?"

"I do not; but I doubt not that I will."

"Sir Edward, you ordinarily end your phrases when you begin them."

"When I entertain fears that I am about to go aground, I wait until a helping hand comes to relieve me of my thought. Now, Captain, follow this series of wonders! —'My white queen disposes of the insolent knight, who placed himself by her side.'—Conceive the feeling of joy

that lightened the heart of La Bourdonnais' adversary. He had been told that he would be mated in nine moves; he laid a snare for La Bourdonnais with the black knight. When, therefore, this piece was captured by La Bourdonnais' queen, the maneuver had proved successful. His opponent was triumphant. For, in fact, appearances were in his favor;—'he now places his bishop, which was standing immediately in front of the *tower* that had just been castled, on the white queen's bishop's fourth, giving double check, by his bishop, to the white elephant, by his castle, to the lady in white.' What a dilemma!"

"But, Sir Edward, that is a masterly move! White loses his queen or his elephant. I forget how La Bourdonnais extricated himself after this false step . . ."

"This false step, Captain, merely caused La Bourdonnais to smile. The great man gave a wicked expression to his features.—He moves his queen to the third square, in front of the one occupied by the black king's elephant, before castling. The black bishop immediately drives off the white elephant in triumph.' The adversary's friends were jubilant and shook hands over the play. Those of the great chancellor of the exchequer hung down their heads. La Bourdonnais, however, still smiled on. He not only did not take the 'black bishop with his elephant, but captured the king's knight's pawn, with his bishop, thus allowing his bishop to be carried off by the black elephant's pawn.' With this move, everybody thought that La Bourdonnais had lost not only the game but his head also. Another wicked smile. The modern Philidor 'takes his pawn with his knight.—The black knight withdraws to his bishop's square.—The white queen gives

*check* by occupying the square, vacated by the black king's elephant.—To screen himself from danger, the black king places himself in front of his elephant.—The white queen retires a square, checking.—The black king has but one square, he occupies it.—The white knight falls back two squares, placing himself in front of the black king.—The black bishop, hitherto forgotten between the white king and his elephant, sacrifices himself, by putting the white queen in check, from her third square.—The white elephant, clearing five squares, gives check.—The black king occupies his only square.—The white queen retires a square, again checking.—The black king moves to his bishop's fourth.—The white pawn which, from the opening, had not been stirred from its position in front of the king, moves forward two squares, giving CHECK and MATE!"

"Hurrah, for La Bourdonnais!" shouted old Jonathan. "That does honor to man. An elephant will never follow up these nine moves. Give me your hand, Sir Edward. It was necessary to show me this incredibly clever play twice to fully elicit my enthusiasm. We shall play it every day, hereafter. You have made me younger by fifty years, Sir Edward, and to render you a fitting return, I am going to prove myself the kind friend who will finish the phrases which your boyish timidity hesitated to complete . . . I know everything, Sir Edward; Willy has confessed his fault to me; your conduct toward him, notwithstanding his wanton provocation, was one of the greatest magnanimity. To quote his own words, Willy has seen your generosity written in blood upon the neck of *Jemidar*. Before claws, tusks, trunks and manes, Sir

Edward, you have borne yourself like a man of daring; but in the presence of the white hairs of an old man and the blonde ringlets of a blooming maiden, you tremble like a bashful boy. It is your character. I must, then, come to your aid: you are in love with Elmina, and cannot summon the courage to lay your request for her hand, before me. Tell me, Edward, am I wrong?"

A color as deep as the blush on an infant's cheek suffused the manly features of Sir Edward; he wished himself beside the Lake of the Hawks, on the Mountain of the Abysses, for the duel in the presence of Jemidar, the nights of terror, the burning marches under a scorching sun; he cast about him for some easy expression, beneath which to simulate his interior agitation, but found none.

His lips, astonished that for the first time they were actually stammering, refused to utter the only intelligent thought which, at length, arose in his bewildered brain. As if disgraced by some shameful deed, he dropped his head upon his hand, and sat looking at the pieces upon the chess table.

"There now, is an answer I like," said Jonathan, with a paternal smile.

"Yes, Captain Jonathan, a person often speaks a great many things when he says nothing."

His words came syllable after syllable, and with much effort. Jonathan stood up, and tapping Sir Edward lightly on the shoulder:

"I am confident you will make an excellent husband for Elmina, nor do I hesitate to give her to you with my eyes shut. In these solitudes we enjoy this advantage; we live a whole year in one day; I am as intimately ac-

quainted with you as with an old friend. This last expedition has secured for you the esteem of the whole family. The man who will coolly face danger and death must be honest. I now understand the torments endured by Elmina; Willy was not their occasion. She was fretting for you . . . . Edward, my son, give me your hand, I feel your own emotion."

Edward grasped Jonathan's hand; and his face lost that expression of irony which had almost grown into his features, and ever attended his serious thoughts with an easy indifference of tone.

"Captain Jonathan," said he in a voice which, beneath the encouraging smile of the old man, gradually resumed its self-reliance, "pardon me if I felt it my duty to use so great an endeavor to obtain an answer to a question which I had not put. I frankly confess that, apart from a proposal of marriage, I enjoy an extensive freedom and facility of action. But in the utterance of this word, my angel guardian, one would say, actually abandons me. Whenever I present a wedding gift, I find that it comes back to me the following day. I, ordinarily, run aground at the church door, and the pen of the civil authority, in the chapter on marriage, as a rule, goes to pieces before recording my name. This obstinacy on the part of fate in persistently refusing to allow of my assuming the title of spouse has forced me to excogitate a theory of my own . . . . To me, it appears, that God has entrusted a mission to certain individuals which calls upon them to traverse the globe for the succor of their fellows, white, black or bronze, and that I am constituted a member of this privileged class. Upon this mission, they survive tempest,

battle, beast, precipice and fire. Now, for a wandering life of this description, there can be little question but that perpetual celibacy is a necessary condition, for domestic cares and the burden of a family would impede their providential movements. Excuse my foolish pride, Captain Jonathan. At bottom the theory is as good as another, and hurts nobody : it has, however, this inconvenience for me, that it makes me absurdly timid. I feel obliged to lay siege to a father or an uncle, with all the prudent strategy of a military engineer assaulting a fortified town. I always provide an issue in the event of retreat to save my self-love, should I meet with a repulse. To-day, while playing this game, I opened and closed my mouth twenty times at the first sacred word. May you live a thousand years to receive my thanks for hastening to my assistance, when courage had deserted me !”

“Edward, myson,” said the aged patriarch of the wilderness in a tone of emotion, “a mission such as you have fulfilled, with so great devotedness and modesty, must one day end. Give a thought to yourself, and be happy. Your fortune lies here. This boundless territory will, one day, own your rule ; it is the dower of my niece Elmina. The land is a mine of gold. Wait for the first vessel that will cast anchor in the bay of Agoa ; I will accompany you to the nearest English colony ; your nuptial vows will there be blessed, and we will return to this dwelling, to find a state of happiness.”

Sir Edward was giving expression to his gratitude in words and gestures of much energy, when Willy and Lorédan entered the great hall. The young men had been engaged in a brief conversation, whose burden may be readily gathered from Willy's closing remarks.

"My dear Monsieur de Gessin," said he, "I again beg of you to count upon my promises. Entertain no fears, but quit that gloomy look; it seems to give the lie to my sincerity."

Willy approached his uncle to take his leave of him.

"My absence will not be prolonged," said he; "I am going on a visit to our friends, our savage neighbors of Lake Makidas; in our unfortunate elephant hunt they gave brave proof of their attachment, and I soon hope with them to take ample revenge upon these perverse brutes."

"My dear Willy," said Jonathan, "my experience has the right to impose silence upon yours. Our ivory expeditions are things of the past; it will be many a long year before we can again use our privilege of hunters. Do not, then, think of revenge. During my life, there will be no other expedition to the north; I will never authorize it. Your project, however, of visiting our good and trusty neighbors has my entire encouragement; but you will do well to make every haste to recompense these good people with gifts according to their taste, for the late services they have rendered us . . . Do not find this strange, Sir Edward," added Jonathan smiling, "we, too, have our principles and, at times, treat our savage neighbors on the footing of brothers. We are children of a republic, and it is well that wherever our lot is cast we never lose sight of this fact."

"There is nothing in this, Captain Jonathan, that could occasion any surprise to me. Altogether the contrary: this manner of treating our neighbors as brothers, although they are black, meets my highest approval.

Are we not, in their eyes, black for the very reason that we are white? I am so thoroughly of your mind in this matter, that I, too, have a duty to fulfill towards this brave people who, notwithstanding my color, have placed me under obligations. I will not suffer Willy to go alone; I shall accompany him. Captain Jonathan, I leave you my friend, M. de Gessin, and the famous game of chess. At my return, I will find our pretty creoles fully convalescent under the attentions of Doctor Nizam. Willy, is the kingdom of the Makidas far from here?"

"I will take Spark, you mount Devit, and we will be there inside of an hour."

"Good! will you have me for a companion?"

"With all my heart, Sir Edward; I owe you a return here, in the south, for that stormy day in the north. This is a secret between you and me."

From the moment he entered, Lorédan's pale face wore a smile which ill sorted with the gloomy look in his eyes.

"My baggage will be ready very shortly," said Edward; "where will we put up, Willy?"

"At the palace of King Té-Kian."

"This devil of an Edward is indefatigable!" said Lorédan, with a forced effort at a gayety which he did not feel.

"I will sleep on horseback, to-night," said Edward, pressing the hands of Jonathan with an earnestness that clearly said, "keep this thing of marriage a secret until my return."

"I am going to inquire about the health of Elmina and of your sister, M. de Gessin," said Jonathan . . . . "And you, my sons, good-bye and an early return."

A few moments later, Lorédan was alone in the great

hall. His feigned smile had vanished. He cast a melancholy glance upon a *fichu* of Nankin crape, worked into the folds of the blinds, and, unrolling a mat upon the inlaid floor, between two fountains, prepared, not a couch for repose, but a cell within which to meditate.



## CHAPTER XVI

### A LETTER AND AN EXPLANATION.

*"The Palace of Te-Kian, the 3rd day of the Moon  
of the Cinnamon Tree.*

**M**Y DEAR FRIEND: it was not without the very best motives, that I left you so abruptly the other day. It would have been impossible for me, after my conversation with Jonathan, to continue a single quarter of an hour in private confidence with you.

"I would have been taxed beyond my powers for a thought to suit the character of my words, for a tone of voice, an attitude, a cast of features, with which to impart the confidence conveyed in this paper, under these emotionless forms which the alphabet quietly furnishes for every style and situation.

"There are letters, syllables and words which, with the utmost epistolary composure, fall into line beneath the pen, for the expression of phrases like this: Lorédan, it is a settled thing; I am to marry Elmina.

"I would never have had the courage to say this to your face.

"Call to mind, my friend, with what animation I spoke of Elmina, the evening we reached the Virginia. After having been half roasted in the conflagration of the 'Malabar' and well nigh swamped in the trough of the Indian billows, I finally found myself within the walls of Jonathan's paradise.

"There, beneath the arching vine branch, beautiful with flowers, seated upon a divan, between two fountains, I beheld a young girl crowned with light and gold. Her face was that of an angel in heaven; her voice as rich as the merry carol of the twilight songster, while her unfeigned goodness told me she was one of earth's greatest glories—woman. With one hand she fondled the silver locks of an old man, with the other she stroked the mane of a noble lion.

"Fire and water could hardly spare a man twice in a life-time and show him, in the desert, a *tableau* like this.

"The impression was a vivid one, and to efface it, impossible.

"At twenty, I would have rushed blindly into a passion, at the peril of beating my brains out against one of those impossible things which hides from us in the evening to show itself in the morning.

"Taught by experience, I paused upon the edge of the precipice, determined to examine my position, before indulging the first faint glimmer of that hope which lights on to love. I am convinced that where there is an exercise of will-force, it is no difficult matter to postpone, to a more auspicious moment, the first appearance of passion. I had, you are aware, many obstacles to surmount.

"Our three days' hunt, and its incidents, about some of which you are yet in the dark, did far more than I had dared to hope towards furthering my prospects. Uncle Jonathan, who, naturally enough, is exerting his remaining strength to insure the happiness of Elmina, and who sees in the future provision of his niece that which will be his own crowning satisfaction in death, has often, in my conversations with him, given expression to thoughts, whose meaning it was not easy to misinterpret. I always made a note of them. In our last conference, however, he was more explicit than on any former occasion. The old gentleman vividly pictured to me the anxiety which rocked Elmina during our unfortunate campaign, and was particularly careful to impress upon me that never before had she manifested the same feverish concern, when her brother Willy ventured into the solitudes of the north.

"You perceive yourself, my friend, that it was not difficult to understand him.

"And, of course, light for light; my silence spoke from my closed lips. The most satisfactory of contracts was registered upon the spot; one to which no signature was appended, but which was ratified, in the broad presence of the sun, by the manly grasp of two loyal hands.

"The solemnity of this recital makes my pen heavy; but as marriage, after religion, is the only serious business on earth, you will excuse the manner by favor of the matter.

"Here I am, then, to be married! But two more months of a single existence to endure!

"I am now at liberty to love Elmina, and I feel that

these two long months of trial will be a brief probation, indeed, for my future happiness.

"To deny the improbable, is to deny Providence. Here you have a man shipwrecked upon a desert coast; he comes poor and naked, like his brother of the gospel: knocks at the gate, and the God of hospitality puts him in possession of an unrivaled diamond, polished by an African sun, in the heart of the universe. This, Lorédan, is my history. Pardon me, I pray you, the last quarter of an hour of a selfishness which I have been distilling over these two pages. Do not, I beg of you, imagine that, because my thoughts are all of myself, I am, therefore, forgetful of you. Apart from matrimony, your interests are my interests; your fortune will be my fortune: I am not one, but, together with you, I am always two.

"If my destiny has so decreed that I am to continue, at the Virginia, the life pursued by the Jonathans, it is of the first importance that I rank high in the esteem of the savages with whom I and Willy are, at present, sojourning.

"My previous forecast was correct, and the presents which I lavished upon the Makidas were not thrown away.

"From our very arrival upon this island in the lake, Willy has been to me a constant subject of observation, and, unless I am very much at fault, his visit to the Makidas is for the furtherance of some mysterious end. There is, however, in all his movements nothing hostile to you or me, for the loyal young fellow simply overwhelms me with his kindness, and his character is too fiery and impulsive to prove false. Has his visit some connection with my marriage?

"Is he here, possibly, with a view to establish a branch of the Virginia upon this pretty little island? Or, has he any pretensions to the reed throne of Té-Kian? I cannot say.

"Willy is quite conversant with the language of these blacks; and, for long hours, he is closeted in secret conference with the old man of the tribe. To see the naturally fiery son of Jonathan, who is impatient of any conversation, drinking in with greedy attention every word of his strange interlocutor, is truly admirable.

"There is, I doubt not, some project at the bottom of all this; I am too familiar with the air and carriage which, without knowing it, a man will assume when a prey to an absorbing idea. Willy is at the mercy of a distracting care or he is maturing some grand scheme.

"You will find the kingdom of the Makidas noticed upon a few maps. It numbers somewhere in the neighborhood of one hundred and fifty huts, disposed about the island like a series of bee-hives. The royal palace, at which we are entertained, crawls along upon the ground, without the remotest pretention to a second story. The roof, which is renewed every year at the public expense, is woven of dry catalpa branches, while the height of the ceiling would hardly permit a good sized dwarf to stand erect.

"The furniture of the royal apartments is from a neighboring firm of banana trees, which manifests its solicitude for the royal comfort by the lavish profusion with which it furnishes its own leaves to strew the royal family couch. The entrance and exit to the palace is through a window which is the door. I had hopes of

meeting my elegant mirror in the queen's boudoir, but her majesty found it more after the fancy of the great ladies of the Makidas to break it into fifty pieces, to accommodate the vanity of her sable train.

"Despite these little criticisms, this people seems to be happy; they have no neighbors and, of course, no enemies.

"They eat nobody and nobody eats them.

"They never work. Their table is furnished with the flower of the boabab, water cocoa, the lake fish and palm oil.

"The women are black, but pretty; the men are of a mild disposition and worship the serpent. All the African savages are fearful of this reptile, which is, I am inclined to think, the reason why they make a god of the only animal which the lion dreads.

"Good-bye; let me know how our young and pretty recluses are faring. I am waiting for Willy; but should he prolong his mysterious visit, I will come back alone, enchanted though I be with King Té-Kian and his beautiful island.

"Yours with true devotion,

"EDWARD."

"P. S.—I forgot to tell you that Elmina is without fortune. Jonathan's honorable frankness was careful not to conceal this from me. However, I fail to see what a mine of gold would add to the grace and beauty of Elmina."

LORÉDAN DE GESSIN TO SIR EDWARD.

"*The Virginia.*

"From the high heaven in which you now are, my dear Edward, you will find it difficult to form a just appreciation of the position in which your unfortunate friend

is struggling: and it will be a more arduous task for myself, to picture this position in its true colors.

"With all your confidence, you still have your secrets: my confidence, too, is not without its reserve. As long as we shall continue to maintain this mysterious distrust, and our mutual intercourse is not clearly defined, our relations will remain disjointed and unworthy of friendship.

"You will notice that I find fault with myself, while I blame you. The meaning of this is, that we should, with mutual accord, and at our very first interview, remove the intolerable embarrassment which our diffidence serves only to continue and augment, and act with that openness of character which is the normal condition of your mind and of my own.

"While awaiting the result of this determination, I am still forced to address you through a cloud of mysteries which our united efforts alone are able to disperse.

"When I attempt my moral autopsy, I am at the utmost pains to define myself truly, even to my own mind: judge then, of my difficulties when I endeavor to reproduce myself before your observation. I am living, as it were, in a troubled dream. I see a dim light swimming before my eyes, and the objects around are veiled in the mournful haze of visions.

"This, I imagine, must be the life of the tomb, when the corpse is yet warm: beneath the closed eyelids, there must be the reflex of a glimmering twilight; it must hear the confused murmur of low spoken words, the far away murmur of the wind sighing in the tall grass or moaning in the tree tops.

"You will understand, my friend, that I, too, am under-

going a probation—that of the tomb. May it never disturb the serenity of yours, happy spouse!

“Your postscript, which had little meaning for you, was full of significance for me: I require no dower from Miss Elmina’s uncle; but of his nephew, Willy, *who is too impulsive to prove false*, I demand an explanation for a certain deception of which I am the victim. With a penniless uncle, I feel permitted to question the fortune of the nephew.

“Here I raise the veil from a corner of my secrets, and unburden myself of them. Strength of character grows feeble with the weakness of body and mind.

“Elmina has come down, but alone. We have had the strangest conversations together under the trees upon the terrace. She required me to rehearse the smallest detail in our late expedition, and I have seen her grow pale, at times, and open her large bright eyes.

“I wanted to speak of you only and of her brother Willy; but, with that exquisite tact which is woman’s privilege, she urged me, by the most earnest solicitations, to tell her something about myself.

“I was forced to comply.

“From another source, however, I was aware that the interest she feigned to manifest in me was directly taken in you, Edward, through me.

“The episode of the lion on the mountain seemed to affect her. She sat down upon a bank of naucleas and made me repeat it.

“Elmina, you know, has a great passion for anecdotes of this kind, and, the truth is, it is worth exposing yourself to great dangers, to enjoy the happiness of recounting *them* to her.

"When I pronounced your name in her presence, and afterwards began, as usual, to go over your merits, she modestly cast down her eyes and turned aside her face, with that wild and charming expression in her look which betrayed everything.

"She loves you, Edward; and, to my knowledge, you are the first man who is worthy of his happiness.

"Knowing that I was speaking to the lady of your future, I did violence to my sorrows that I might meet her questions with a quiet exterior and a calm reply. It is not right to inflict upon others the consequences of our own grief.

"I am even able to describe the costume which Elmina wears during her convalescence. I trust my intentions will meet your approval. She dresses in white with a Chinese shawl of red and blue, folding upon her bosom; her hair, falling back from the ample plaits over her temples, is caught in a net of rich pearls, mingled with the gold flowers of the cassia. There must, indeed, be treasures of grace, charms and attractions that are simply irresistible, around this young and beautiful girl, since, for a moment, I forgot the living death within me, to count, one by one, these pretty trifles of creole coquetry. Of course it was with your eyes and your mind that I observed everything.

"But, suddenly, my brain was confused and my tongue uttered nothing but incoherence . . . Behind the curtain of the kiosk I saw gliding by, a shadow more brilliant than the sun! And my replies to Elmina's questions became abrupt and meaningless.

"She must certainly have remarked my embarrass-

ment, and I have no idea what interpretation she will put upon it. My eyes saw nothing more, my ears heard nothing . . . .

"When I awoke, if I slept, I found in my hand a branch of malvisay, abloom with its white and rose blossoms, and just cut from the tree.

"Elmina had retired.

"This wild bouquet is, doubtless, meant for you; it was presented to me for you; I send it to you with this letter, for I am fully aware of the value of the smallest gift, prompted by and accompanied with love.

"Good-bye, dear Edward; return as soon as you can. I am not two; I am alone.

"LORÉDAN DE G."

SIR EDWARD TO LORÉDAN DE GESSIN.

"*The Palace of Te-Kian.*"

"When two friends walk side by side along the same path, dear Lorédan, they must be resigned to a sad alternative: one will have the flowery side; the other, the thorny. This is destiny. The day will come when the soul of the one will overflow with joy, and that of the other will groan beneath the oppression of despair. It is in vain that we endeavor to trim our lives to the requirements of two and to regulate mutual circumstances with an algebraic exactness, that both may pass under the same shadow and both walk beneath the same sunbeam. Something unforeseen will fall from heaven, or issue from hell, and this beautiful harmony vanishes.

"I have, dear Lorédan, put things in their very worst *light*, and purposely exaggerated my joy and your grief,

in the hope of happening upon some error in your favor, among the casualties of the future.

"And were we fated to experience the utmost rigor of this law, it would be incumbent upon each of us to disguise a tear or suppress a smile, lest one wound the sorrow or disturb the serenity of the other.

"You will think, probably, that I speak a little too much at my ease upon this philosophical expedient; whatever is propitious, in the present situation, appears to make for my side.

"I admit that I am sailing under a favorable and a serene sky, while tempest and cloud are around and above you. But in life, which, with all its brevity, is yet so long, are there not, at times, fitful gusts and sudden tacks by which fortune is upset, and which force us to seek from a friend that helpful compassion which we granted ourselves upon the eve of disaster?

"Love, youth and woman, the three sweetest things on earth, are but too well acquainted with the bitterness of the morrow; well might one who has felt the pangs they inflict, say to his friend: Pity me, that I am happy, and permit me to rejoice, that you are not.

"These are paradoxes to those whose path is along the common rut of civil existence. But, my friend, upon this earth, paved as it is with errors, upon this field of man's action, paradoxes are pits within which truth lies hidden.

"When misfortune presses upon me with crushing weight, I am provided with a consolation to which I, then, have recourse: I forthwith assume that I am five years older; and thus removed, I form an estimate of my case, from my situation in the future.

"At that distance from the present, where other cares concern me, other relations surround me, where other streams and other lands, but above all, other sovereign consolations, daughters of the hour, delight me, I rank my present evil with those catastrophes of the past whose recollection becomes a trifling memory.

"If I had a friend, who was writhing under the distracting obsession of some mysterious evil, and whose last hope had vanished, I would counsel him to employ this moral remedy; the future is the best antidote for the past.

"I see your sad smile, and I acknowledge the thought which disturbs your features.

"The absorbing grief that is gnawing at your vitals would not, you tell me, find much relief from this delusive remedy.

"You again refer me to the postscript appended to my last letter. In this connection you accuse Willy of falsehood. This, naturally, leads me to conjecture that, for some service rendered him and unknown to me, Willy has promised you a mine of gold. If I mistake not, there is, after all, some truth mixed up with my error; is it not so? Well! here, at least, let me give you every assurance.

"I know Willy; he is, as we have remarked a hundred times, a primitive young man. If he made you any promise, hold it for certain that he will keep it; unless in deceiving you he was himself deceived.

"A few days will throw light upon everything.

"Yesterday evening, in a solitary corner of the island, Willy and I were sitting side by side, upon the lake shore. His expression was grave and his features solemn; you will gather from this letter, which I am authorized to

transmit to you, what passed between us. Unfortunately, this cold paper and these conventional signs, vague translations of thought, will never reproduce the warm word and the proud look of my savage and poetic companion.

"That scene will never be effaced from my memory, which holds, treasured up within its thousand cells, so many and so varied pictures.

"Night hung over the solitude; the lake was a reflex of the starry firmament; and the silvery blossoms of the tall myrtles waving above our heads shed their rich perfume around us. Willy took my hand in his own and said:

"Listen to me, Sir Edward; I am about to reveal myself and to tell things which are incredible. You, however, will believe me and help me.

"You have often heard of my noble father and the fabulous hunting expeditions he led into the north.

"They have told you that he was the bravest and the most intelligent of men. I, his unworthy son, will add nothing to the praises which, here, everywhere, accompany his name.

"Shortly before his death, he made me sit by his bedside, while he said to me:

"Willy, my dear child, I am unwilling that, when I am gone, you should reproach my memory with rearing you in this distant land, an exile from the society of men, your natural brothers. I do not wish that Elmina should join in this reproach. I must carry with me to the tomb the consolation of knowing that my son and daughter will be free to continue in their present home or to abandon it . . . .

“It would be sad, too, to feel that my children, tired of isolation, will, one day, wander up and down the universe, in search of a fortune. Unable to furnish them with an opulence already accumulated, I leave them the means of acquiring it. Willy, the savages in the south, upon the island in the lake, are of a peaceful disposition and full of gratitude; make as many friends as you are able in their village.

“The day you will summon them to follow you, they will be at your side, be sure of it; I know them.

“If, when you shall have attained age and strength, the idea of amassing a fortune or of emigrating should possess you; if the chase and the harvest fail you—for, eventually, everything becomes exhausted—then, my dear Willy, go to the tribe on the island, and say to every savage individually:

“My friend, I need you, you must follow me whithersoever I go . . . .’

“Two hundred men will rise up at the call. Put yourself at their head and march.

“Yes, my dear son, at your departure march along the ordinary route, and you will soon see that which no human eyes but mine have ever beheld. Your way will lie across the Gray Ridge. This is a steep height and difficult to scale. Ascend this mountain.

“Along its northern slope, there are dens of lions. Descend with all your men, in single file, at noon day, into the southern plain, where you will not meet a single lion.

“At the base of the mountain, stretches a narrow valley between steep ridges of perpendicular rocks. Here you will find it necessary to open a passage; but, with an

intelligent determination, nothing is impossible. A forest of oaks and aralies, together with a thick undergrowth of brush trees and plants of every name, chokes up this horrid defile.

“Within it, an innumerable family of animals live and gnaw, like insects in a thicket. You must pass through this herd of monsters, and open a broad way for your return.

“This road along the plain will prove essential to your purposes, as you shall see.

“To discover what no man had yet seen, I, myself, turned this impenetrable defile, and climbed the rugged rocks, clinging to every jutting crag or naked root, upon which I could put hand or foot.

“Reaching the topmost summit, I saw, beneath me and directly below the height upon which I stood, a circular rampart of mountains, to which there was but a single entrance from the east.

“In this valley you shall witness what I first beheld and accuse your eyes of falsehood: you will see there the cemetery of the elephants!

“The traditions of Interior Africa speak of these secret spots, whither the brute inhabitants of the desert retire to enter upon their agony, and to die far away from their fellows, as if to rid them of a carcass, and to spare them the trials of a departure, which holds out no hope of return. The elephant's instincts are equal to a course of this kind. Now, Willy, my son, I would not deceive you with a promise of more than you can possibly acquire.

“This cemetery is not, it must be admitted, the only one within this zone; the elephant species is not so widely

scattered as that of other animals; the ivory which it is possible to collect in this open mine is not so considerable as one would, in the first moment of enthusiasm, be led to believe; yet, your sister and you can gather thence a very respectable fortune.

“You will afterwards notice a large rock like a jutting stone upon the ramparts of a demolished fortification.

“Upon this eternal page I carved the name of Elmina in gigantic characters: the direction of the last letter points to a small valley within which I discovered large heaps of that quality of ivory, which, in commerce, is known as dead or fossilized ivory. At the base of this natural wall is a vein of emeralds easy to work. You know that according to the testimony of Hannon, the traveler, there are emeralds in the country of Cerne, on the mountains of Elmina, in Western Africa and near the Troglodytes. God and your father transfer these treasures to you, my dear Willy! Courage and skill alone you will need to secure them; they must then be yours, when, in your judgment, the hour shall arrive to enter upon their possession.

“While you await the approach of that moment, let this information remain an inviolable secret.”

“This, Sir Edward, was what my father spoke to me; and I believe him.

“The hour is at hand, everything is ready.

“If I urge this great expedition, and am eager for this heritage of my father, it is because there are legitimate motives to justify my impatience. You will, yourself, in a brief space, be in a condition to judge my conduct, and you will march with us, beneath the bright light of our

southern sun and the glorious splendor of the stars, to this lake of ivory, beside which my father has written Elmina's name, as it were fixing his last testament upon the rock which guards the dower of my young sister.'

"My dear Lorédan, I here suppress the conversation which followed this disclosure.

"What could I add to this?

"My soul, trained to surprises, is fired to enthusiasm, at the thought of this marvelous expedition.

"It is, moreover, one of my dreams that is about to be realized, only upon a modest scale. You have not forgotten the picture I drew for you, of a crusade into Africa against these monsters and their solitary fastnesses. I was a prophet and knew it not.

"The sun of this land, beating down upon our foreheads, makes us, in the delirium of our brains, present to our own futures. Prophecy is a product of the sacred hills of the Orient; it is a looming up within our minds simultaneously with a view of the zenith, discovering to us things that will come to pass.

"Again, therefore, with our passions, our loves, our souls, we are to push forward into a region alive with bristling horrors.

"What a joy to carry along with you the thought of a woman into this whirl of light and darkness, this roaring crater!

"How pale and cold is love in the midst of those prisons of mud and weariness which they call cities, between the dim flickering on a lamp-post and the stupid patter upon the sidewalk!

"Ours is the disheveled fury of a passion which clears

the foaming torrent at a bound, swims the broad lake, leaps from the valley to the mountain top, and wars to the death with the monsters of the desert, ever carrying with it an adorable image, a phantom of grace and love!

"Lorédan, here is something powerful enough to resuscitate even your wasting life! Be alive!

"Yours very affectionately,  
"EDWARD."

LORÉDAN DE GESSIN TO SIR EDWARD.

*"The Virginia."*

"In truth, dear Edward, there is in this a rousing of which I am surely in need, and which alone will save me from despair. I am again alive! Your letter has galvanized a corpse. You will find me up.

"By the same mail, Uncle Jonathan was informed of Willy's project; he has also taken me half into his confidence about your marriage with Elmina.

"It appears that he will not acquaint Elmina with your request until after the expedition.

"Miss Elmina is besides so feeble that she should prudently avoid all serious conversation.

"Do you not apprehend the same anxieties on the part of the ladies, during the coming expedition?' I asked Jonathan.

"No," he answered, 'this time, they will feel quite confident; for they will see a whole army upon the march. Moreover, they will find a special motive for a confidence in our declaration upon honor, that the expedition will march to the west, twenty-four miles from the present kingdom of the elephants.'

"Good-bye, Edward. How happy you are to possess a heart so warm, a voice so tranquil, a soul of fire and a face like ice!

"I wish that, at this moment, I could imitate you, for it appears to me that all who look at me read upon my face the strange thoughts that agitate my soul.

"Good-bye; for a short while.

"Yours with true affection,

"LORÉDAN DE GESSIN."

"P. S.—Nizam has received Willy's orders and those of Jonathan. Willy will lead the expedition as far as the Gray Ridge, where Nizam will assume command for the region of the unknown.

"You did, undoubtedly, have a presentiment, Edward upon the Mountain of the Abysses, when you sketched the Gray Ridge and its mysterious horizon.

"Do not send your sketch to the Charing-Cross National Gallery; keep it for Elmina's boudoir. L."



## CHAPTER XVII

## THE IVORY EXPEDITION.

**B**ETWEEN the western moat of the Virginia and the meadow, there rises a mound overgrown with high grass, surmounted by a cross, and shaded by several tall myrtles. This is the grave of the elder Jonathan, the father of Willy and Elmina.

The second evening, after the events traced in the last letters, there were two hundred young Makidas braves gathered in a circle about this grass-grown mound. A solemn silence pervaded the scene, while every eye was fixed upon Willy. The young creole was kneeling beside the ashes of his father, deeply absorbed, and as it were listening to some underground voice from which he was gathering his last instructions.

Edward and Lorédan, with head uncovered, and leaning upon their arms, stood beside the son of Jonathan.

Willy suddenly arose, broke a branch from a myrtle, and crying "Forward," darted towards the western bridge.

Thereupon, every hunter broke a branch of the weeping myrtle and hurried forward after his young chief.

At the foot of Honning-Clip, old Jonathan was waiting to bid his nephew and his European friends farewell and to bless their arms. These *adieux* at an end, the troop, at a hurried pace, ascended Beeshill, whose summit was fast taking on the bright colors of the setting sun.

Before they buried themselves in the green depths ahead, Willy, Edward, Lorédan and Nizam cast a last look back upon the distant Virginia, and a thousand farewells were wafted upon the evening air towards two bright forms, angels or women, whose linked figures, leaning over the balcony of the belvidere, were waving their sky-blue scarfs among the stars of the American flag.

Willy, Nizam and our two friends lead the van. After them followed Neptunio, with Duke, Elmina's lion, in the leash; behind him marched thirty hunters, in single file, whose bodies were girt with the slough of the serpent, and at whose belt hung the Indian clarion, more dreaded than the reptile itself by hyena, lion and panther.

In the rear of these, armed with muskets and Malay *cris*, were a hundred light and trained warriors, who thought it a trifle to fire a ball in the act of clearing a foaming torrent.

The rear was brought up by a body of these same blacks armed with lance and bow, and carrying an arrow ready strung to leap from their fingers into the breast of an ambushed foe. Over this rear guard floated the red banner of the Makidas, whose rough texture, braided by the women of their tribe, represented a Makida strangling a lion with the skin of the serpent. The stiff design and

the glare of the colors recalled the temple paintings of old Egypt. It was on solemn occasions only that this banner the palladium of the tribe, was unfurled to the breeze.

As night drew on, the hunters entered the forest. Leaving the road to the Lake of the Hawks on their right, they directed their march towards the northwestern horizon.

The example of a rigorous silence was given by the chiefs; the velvety softness of the tall grass deadened the noise of their steps. Upon the open plain, their march was a hurried flight.

Had there been in the broad wilderness a single spectator of this midnight scene, his hair would have stood on end as he saw this cloud of demons, rushing along through the dark corridors of the overhanging forest, firing the scene with the glare of their flaming eyeballs.

The south wind rose with the stars, as if to favor the daring inroad of the hunters, and to bear them, like a living whirlwind, towards the horizon of the north. The trees of the forest, around whose roots one unbroken stillness reigned, were agitated at their summit like the noisy billows of a storm-beaten sea. Their mournful harmony filled the solitude, giving to it a soul and a voice worthy of its vastness. Along the highway of pitchy darkness, through which they sped their flight, the hunters never, for a moment, lost sight of Willy. In his costume of white, and bounding forward twenty paces in advance of the foremost, he was the beacon light of his brave Makidas, the phantom, in their eyes, of his father risen from the tomb to lead them on a chase of vengeance and extermination.

The dull, hoarse and snarling sounds, which started up around them, in the brambles and beneath the thickets that choked the ravines, indicated to them that entire families of these fierce races, stricken with fear, fled at the approach of those formidable enemies, who were led on by a lion, and girt with the serpent.

At sunrise, the party was far from the Virginia, and the aspect of the surrounding desert recalled nothing known within the domain of man.

The soil itself, by its configuration, seemed created for the inhabitants of another world. There was no foothold up its mountain steeps; the trees, thinly planted over a rugged soil, were clothed in strange, unamiable forms; the streams, coursing down from their sources in the south, fled northward, as if refusing to man their treasures of freshness and irrigation, to bear them to beings more worthy than he to enjoy the benefits of creation. Over this wild panorama, the glorious sun shone down with that supreme quiet which dispenses God's light to the good and the bad, to city and to desert.

At points along the horizon, the blasts from the south raised far-spreading sand clouds, that obscured, as with a fiery veil, sky, forest and mountain. They were the same death bearing hurricanes that overwhelm with desolation the laboring caravans of the Sahara, Abyssinia and the bazaar of Adel.

The cloud had passed over them. Only at long intervals did they meet with a cluster of nopals which stood up inflexible before the breeze that hissed through their branches. Often, among narrow defiles of the valley, gazelles, trembling with fear, and driven before

the howling tempest, fled for refuge into the midst of the hunters, and seemed, with their large wet eyes and supplicating cries, to ask protection from friends against the claws of the fierce assassins of the wilderness.

It was not long before they could distinguish, through the rents of the neighboring rocks and the gaping mouths of the bordering caverns, the enormous shaggy heads of wild beasts watching, with looks of rage and stupefaction, this band of insolent usurpers led on by a lion.

It was then that the Indian clarions taught the echoes of the desert notes unheard before; the young savages of the vanguard hurled themselves upon their faces to the ground, uncoiled their hideous reptiles, and, themselves, crawled forward with a marvelous agility in their horizontal contortions; and the caravan swept by this insurgent menagerie like a whirlwind, delivering an uninterrupted fire from every rifle in the troop, mingling, for the first time, the wild din of battle with the howls of terrestrial monsters and the loud roar of the stormy heavens.

The fury of this daring and dash was sustained with that success which never fails to accompany intelligence, strength and boldness. At the summit of the Gray Ridge, the column halted. Ranging around, from this high station, the eye was lost along endless horizons receding far beyond any assignable boundary. But the hunters forgot everything to follow Willy's finger, as he pointed, to the opposite flank of the valley, where, girt with an impregnable forest, they behold the perpendicular rock from whose surface radiated the word *ELMINA*. A thousand joyful shouts hailed the name which the elder Jonathan had carved in the wilderness.

Tears coursed down Willy's cheek; Lorédan cried aloud that they should forthwith precipitate themselves into the valley, and, from its depths, bound upward to the sacred stone. Sir Edward, a strict disciplinarian, awaited in silence the orders of his chief, while he stroked Duke's mane and whispered into his ear the name of Elmina.

Nizam, who, at this point, replaced Willy in command of the expedition, was reconnoitering his position with the calm eye and steady reflection of an experienced general, aiming at every combination which would neutralize the chances of danger.

"Master," said he to Willy, "I now understand your honorable father's intention: he directed us to these heights to give us, at a distance, a better view of the rock of Elmina and the woody vale that leads to the cemetery of the elephants. On our return march, however, we will follow along the plain; you will see this later. Yonder, in the east, creeps that sharp cornice balustrade along which your honorable father followed, at a thousand fathoms above the depths of the wood-grown valley. He was alone, and had not at his command our resources to force that bristling pass, which is, literally, a nest of fierce monsters of every fur and claw. Master, our estimates of the distance which separates us from the rock of Elmina agree. It is deceptive, and appears to be short, because the horizon resting upon the mountain ranges in front of us is boundless. It is clear, that we will not reach the base of the rock before sundown, this evening."

"Nizam," said Willy, directing his glass over the valley, "that gorge will stop us long, and we may lose a great many men in it. The whole defile is horrible with a race

of monsters. Nizam, my eyes are excellent and my glass is true. In the low sedge of yonder ravine, I distinguish two undulations very perceptibly waving in contrary directions; one flows from the south northward, following the current of the wind; the other moves from the north in a southerly direction, in obedience to an instinctive impulse. The beasts in wait for us are traveling against the wind, and are even now menacing us. Were I alone, Nizam, or were we two only, I would climb above the gorge, along that overhanging pathway followed by my father; but everybody has not our hands nor our feet."

"Master," said Nizam, with an Indian's smile, "we shall all go through that defile; believe me. During our war in the Nizam, there was a similar one near Hyderabad, within which the Taugs were lying in wait for us, like tigers under cover; but we all pushed through it.... Master, our men have satisfied their hunger and thirst and are sufficiently rested; I will give orders to resume the march."

At the Indian's command to move forward, the entire caravan fell down the mountain side along a steep path bristling with small, sharp, loose flint stones. Nizam, as light and joyful as a man who is sure of what he is about, sang, "Captain Smith of Halifax," the refrain of which was repeated by Sir Edward only. Willy and Lorédan maintained a sad silence: the one was thinking of his dead father, the other of his absent father.

Their way lay for a long while over the plain and across a rocky space, before they reached the dreaded gorge. Nizam moved on at the head of the column, rifle on catch, like the drill-sergeant of an English regiment, without a

word, signifying to every private the position of his piece and the carriage of his body. At ten steps from the outermost trees, the troop halted.

The dark gorge was a mile long and hermetically obstructed by trees and plants which, from the ground upward, were one network of tangled branches, keen edges, ragged roots and thorny trunks.

The elephants themselves, one would say, had planted this giant vegetation to defend their graves from sacrilegious invasions, and to close the only avenue which nature had left open, to the south.

In the foreground, like a *chevaux de frise* upon the edge of a redoubt, bristled a thicket of gigantic hollies and wild aralies. Behind these, locked in an immovable embrace, stood a compact forest of theobromes, giant laurels, styrax, elodeas, loasas, and the twenty-four different species of oak which HUMBOLDT discovered within the belt of the equator. The south wind, plunging into the depths of this dark vegetation, hissed as maliciously, as if every tree in the thicket was waving with serpents instead of branches. Nizam threw himself in among the young savages of the rear guard, and began to talk with them. The entire guard was soon in a state of much excitement.

Willy examined the neighborhood in search of the airy path along which his father traveled, in turning the defile.

"I confess," said Lorédan to Sir Edward, "that if my head was free from cares, this expedition would constitute the most amusing episode in my life."

"Listen to me, my dear Lorédan," said Sir Edward; "lay your cares here upon this rock; you may resume

them at your return. We must all surrender ourselves, body and mind, to the impressions of the moment. There is, I think, enough here to occupy any man's thoughts . . . . We are at the bottom of a well; and unless a man is an eagle or a Jonathan, I see no practical way out of it, except through that defile. If we attempt a passage along this path of briers and thorns, which, by the way, is not the path to heaven, we shall be torn to shreds by the claws of these tiger-like brambles, which will suffer nothing but our skeletons to reach the other end. If Nizam leads us out of this pass, he is a great man."

"Edward, look at our friend, Nizam; he and our savage friends are maturing some devilish scheme."

"With these two hundred demons, the impossible is an easy affair, I know. However, Lorédan, should some monstrous fatality set us aground in this expedition, I will return to my original project . . . ."

"What project, Edward?"

"A project of which I have never yet spoken to you. It first occurred to me aboard the Chinaman, on the occasion of my sending those presents to the tribe of the Makidas."

"But what project is it, Edward?"

"A very simple one. With my remaining piasters, I will build a man-of-war, embark with these two hundred devils and declare war against the King of Borneo."

"You will gain a great deal by a declaration of war against the King of Borneo."

Sir Edward readjusted his dress, combed his beard and hair, changed his gloves, and said:

"Lorédan, my friend, this king is an Arabian usurper;

I knew him when he was a slave of Lord Cornwallis. You are not perhaps aware that, in Borneo, there are mines of gold dust; we will vanquish this usurper, and put ourselves in possession of these mines; nothing easier."

"You astonish me, my friend, Edward! . . . . The present is not occupation enough for you; but you must be occupied with a descent on Borneo!"

"Well, if we strand in these waters, we must head our bark towards other shores!"

"How cool a temper!"

"Furthermore, Lorédan, yonder, on the summit of the Gray Ridge, by a blue line to the east, I could distinguish the windings of the sea; the land along that coast runs down a steep slope, and, from the outline of the shore, I recognized Port de Gessin . . . . You know what I mean? . . . . the one I discovered . . . . Not to compromise the Jonathans, I will put out, upon my cruise against Borneo, from the port which bears your name . . . . Lorédan, nothing better consoles us for a lost hope than a new one. If we cannot have ivory, we will take gold dust."

"Edward, in action I find you serious; you are, then, dispensed from earnestness in words."

"Lorédan, I am delighted beyond measure to find you so full of energy and heart, to-day. Everything will happen for the best; you are hopeful; we shall succeed. My words are very serious, this time. Look at Nizam."

The Indian, with the aid of the savages, had gathered an enormous heap of leaves and branches which had been dried by the sun and the south wind. Placing these exceedingly combustible spoils at the entrance of the de e, Nizam, with the aid of the south wind, his powerful ally, fired the entire *mass*.

Parched by the sun, the dense foliage of the laurel immediately burst forth into a crackling flame, which flung its sparks and cinders around upon the neighboring trees and shrubs. In an instant, columns of fire, shaken by the wind and cut into rhomb-shaped thunderbolts, rolled upwards beneath the brow of the mountain. The shouts of joy that went up from the savages, the roaring of the tempest, the flames and the wild beasts, reverberating with an infinite loudness in this world of echoes, formed the most horrible concert that ever fell upon the ear of man.

Out of the caverns and distant forest depths came back answering cries, from the mighty lords of this brute domain, ancient settlers in a land of horrors. They fled frightened to the north before this unknown enemy, that, for the first time, with fiery crested mane arching upwards to the mountain tops, invaded their solitary home.

While the fierce family of felines, in search of some outlet through which to gain a shelter from the flames, were prowling about among the now charred trunks, there appeared at the summit of the trees in wild agitation, gesticulating fiercely, gnashing their teeth and writhing with an almost human agony in their faces, the whole race of quadrumana—pongos, blue-faced momes, black monkeys and ouistitis, as nimble as squirrels—that jolly and humorous population of the green city, whose delight it is to provoke the lion with impunity, as they hang by their tails from the bending branches, and insult his majesty with loud peals of laughter or the sharp cry of demons.

At this supreme moment, the whole family, in utter *consternation*, enacted all those scenes so common in a *burning city*.

The young monkeys carried their aged parents from story to story; husbands were seen bearing their fainting consorts to a place of safety; mothers clasped their young to their breasts and, with eyes turned to heaven, screamed for help and salvation: the misanthropes, the selfish and the bachelors, untrammelled by domestic ties, leaped from top to top among the trees and from crag to crag along the shelving cliffs of the gorge, until they were lost in the whirlwind and smoke that hovered above the northern abyss.

Erect and surrounded by his satellites, his large eyes and his Indian bronze reflecting the glare of the flames, Nizam stood upon a jutting ledge watching the fire. He looked like Satan, invading the central depths of the globe to found a branch of hell, and, from the height of his fiendish pride, smiling upon the work of his power.

The south wind drove on the raging flames with a frightful velocity. Oaks were devoured like flowers; it even shook its fiery torch within the moss-grown cavern, dried up the gushing mountain torrent, and, when all was ashes and cinder, swept away the glowing heaps with its mighty wings, chasing masses of carbon before it like chaff. Nothing remained but a blackened trunk, here and there, like the ruins of some colonnade, in an immense gallery devastated by the Erostratus of a city of giants.

Long after the fire, the ground boiled with the intense heat which it had absorbed. When, at length, the hunters felt the ground cool beneath their naked feet, the sun had but one hour of daylight to shed upon the world. Nizam lead the way through the passage just opened by the flames and the simoon.

The crust of the earth was laid bare; the last cinder had been hurried forward before the wind. The whole caravan defiled in triumph through this ancient domain, within which the ark had deposited its wild reserve of monsters, deeding over to them in perpetuity the stern loveliness of this primeval vale.

At the end of the pass, which was as level as an English highroad, they found themselves at the base of the mountain, on whose summit, was written the name of Elmina. Nizam turned to the right, treading alone between parallel ridges of perpendicular rocks piled one above the other, along a short and narrow outlet resembling a secret passage in an Egyptian temple. At the extremity of this valley, the ground went down abruptly before his feet, like a battlement in the escarpment of a rampart, and he stood looking out upon the Cemetery of the Elephants.

He hissed like a boa, and the hunters followed the signal of their chief.

The landscape was desolate, and such as Jonathan had described it, although he had seen it only from the summit of the mountain, guessing at, without having penetrated, the passage opened by Nizam.

In this necropolis of giant brutes, there was not a blade of living grass: death everywhere. Centuries of simoons and African suns had reduced the colossal carcasses to powder, and, with the aid of the hawks, had laid bare the mighty skeletons. The picture was a sad one; and one on which the eye rested with a sort of pity, at the thought that these almost intelligent animals, who had chosen this plain for their burial ground, would now abandon to their

enemy what they could no longer defend from his sacrilegious usurpation. The European hunters stood confounded at the sight. The embrasure of this natural battlement, cut into the solid rock, projected out horizontally, at a height of fifteen feet, above the cemetery below.

Standing in a commanding attitude, with his foot upon the battlement, and his arms crossed upon his breast, Willy measured with his eye the extent of his father's inheritance. His lips, his nostrils, betrayed his interior emotion. He never grew tired of gazing upwards, a thousand fathoms above his head, at the rock which his father, in his eagle flight, had scaled long years before and which, at that moment, was lighted up with the last beam of the retiring sun and brilliant with the letters of the sweet name, Elmina.

The Makidas hunters, who idolized Willy, were gathered in silence behind their young chief. They waved a salute to the sacred rock, with the banner of their tribe, and cast at its base the myrtles gathered upon the tomb of Jonathan.

After a long silence passed in sacred recollection, Willy returned to his troop and said :

"My friends, I take you to witness, that my father's observations were all true and that his surmises were correct, even to that narrow pass opening into the plain of ivory. The obstacle which confronts us has no further existence. When it shall become necessary, we will push our way over it. My friends, I am thankful for the aid which you have afforded me in this great enterprise. I still require your assistance and count upon your help. You must unite with me in transporting this rich treasure

to some neighboring seaport. Nizam has opened the valley to us by the fire that swept the gorge this morning. On our return and upon our second expedition, we may travel unimpeded over the plain. What remains to accomplish will be a pastime for men like you. Willy Jonathan will not forget your services; he swears it before the shade of his father, which fills the immensity of this desert!"

A thrill of joy followed these words of the young chief.

Willy then walked over to Lorédan; with one hand he took the hand of the young Frenchman, and with the other extended over the ivory plain, he said:

"Lorédan de Gessin, I have kept my word, and there is what I promised you."

"Lorédan, overwhelmed with joy, seized the standard of the Makidas, and, precipitating himself upon the bony plain, he cried aloud:

"I take possession of this land in the name of the family of Jonathan!"



## CHAPTER XVIII

## A NIGHT BENEATH THE ROCK OF ELMINA.

**W**ILLY and Sir Edward immediately hurried along the same path after Lorédan, while Nizam, with the remainder of the troop, was not slow to range himself around the standard that had been planted by a French arm upon the ancient realm of the elephants.

The sun had already disappeared behind the neighboring mountains, and the day of shade which lighted up the granite precinct had all the appearance of a northern twilight. The shrill harmony of the dying simoon was heard in this immense bone yard, where the grass, suiting itself to the mighty skeletons hidden within it, was, also, of colossal stature.

One would fancy that he saw and heard the battle field of Zama, such as it was when the King of Syria, Antiochus, passed over it, two centuries before Christ. Not even a dismal vale destined to receive the remains of man could have started the thoughts which this place of horrors inspired.

The soul drew back in surprise and strange pity, at the thought of all the untold havoc which so many generations of animals had caused by their loves, passions and wars, to come, at length, like pygmies, to lie upon this rocky bed and render up the last powerful breath which animated their mighty frames.

As the last ray of light flashed like a streak of phosphorus across a lake of ivory, the European hunters suffered one of the strangest illusions. To them, it appeared that an elephant, borne down with years, had reached the eastern vale with weary steps and bowed head, and that, with a great effort, he raised his proboscis for the last time to know from the emanations that filled the air where was that place of rest in which his gigantic forefathers awaited him! . . . .

Like this fancy must those imposing funerals have been which, in ancient days, moved through this solitary land. To-day, they exist but elsewhere. Even now, within unexplored zones, these solemn obsequies are still performed. It is but natural that these animal minds, these brutes with almost human thought, who are chaste in their loves, should, in their deaths, be recollected.

The hunters readily found niches, beneath the rock of Elmina, within which to bestow themselves for the night.

Willy had traversed this vast burying ground, examining, with Nizam, into its smallest details. Edward and Lorédan had commodiously established themselves at the mouth of a cavern, after having discharged two shots into the interior, to inquire whether they were disturbing any lodger in this unfurnished hotel.

*This precaution, however, was unnecessary. The firing*

of the forest in the valley had promulgated sentence of exile against every dweller in the bush and every anchorite in the surrounding Thebaid.

The two friends, after the fashion of hunters before retiring, prepared themselves for repose by a low and chatty conversation, upon subjects of a desultory nature, but which ultimately took a turn that either would have little expected.

"Here, you have another chapter which is missing in 'SAAVERS' natural history!' said Sir Edward, with a drowsy look, and linking his hands under his head for a pillow. "I must write an article for the 'India Review,' on the cemetery of the elephants! Saavers' nephews will give me the lie . . . ."

"Or Saavers' sons," said Lorédan, stretching himself upon the ground.

"Saavers had no sons; learned men never have any; nothing but nephews: it is a much easier matter. These nephews will set upon me. It will be simply cruel! When I think of that poor LE VAILLANT, the hardiest, most reverent and loyal of navigators, I tremble for myself! Because Le Vaillant committed the fault of amusing his readers with the fact that, in Africa, he had met an elephant as a person meets a friend on a walk, they treated his charming book as an absurd fable. Can you calculate from here what will be the anger of Saavers' nephews, when I publish that discovery, in the valley? I fear Kemble considerably, too. This learned gentleman has never left his cottage on Tottenham Road, because he detests the cold, heat, fatigue and the sea sickness. In revenge, he has made it a specialty to pick out the errors

upon geographical charts and to correct the blunders of navigators. I expect a severe lesson . . . . Upon mature reflection, I will play them all a cruel trick."

"In what way, Edward?"

"I will write nothing."

"But it seems to me, that this mine of ivory does not belong to you, and that the stronger motive of speculation and proprietorship much more than the fear of Kemble or SaaVERS' nephews forbids your publishing anything in connection with this discovery."

"Good! Lorédan, I wanted to lead you on to this ground; I have succeeded. Pure Brittanian diplomacy! . . . . Come, my friend; let us talk plainly, and come to an understanding about this ivory and the emeralds, before we fall asleep. Jonathan and Willy are honest folks and just men; we will not have to proceed against them. There are no lawyers at the Virginia; although I am sure they will get there. We are yet in the barbarous state; we have no other judges than good sense, natural equity and sound reason. In the absence of Code, everybody forms the best judgment he can . . . . Willy, without contradiction, will have the lion's share; in Africa, here, especially, his right is supreme. Jonathan has incontestable privileges, and nobody refuse him what he adjudges to himself. Nizam is nothing but a servant; yet, when they need him, he is master, and the Jonathans are too generous to forget his services in this lucrative expedition. Passing on to myself. Since Jonathan bestows upon me his adorable Elmina, he will not dispose of her without a dower. I hold her portion at nothing, for I can never *treat her* as an inheritance; but I must suffer its imposi-

tion, in the interest of my children. Now, Lorédan, help me to trace you in this partition of the spoils. What will remain for you?"

"Willy's word," said Lorédan, raising himself upon his elbow. "Edward, you wish to know all; you are wearied with conjectures. Well! put aside further conjectures; you shall know all. You saw me to-day leap down upon the plain of ivory, and take possession of it, in the name of the Jonathans. What I did then was to reassure my sense of delicacy, if my honorable intentions were insufficient to justify me in my own eyes. Willy promised to grant me whatever I would ask him. This evening, even, he took my hand, with an expression of the fullest meaning. Willy will give me satisfaction."

"And what did you promise in exchange, my dear Lorédan?"

"Edward, you know well that I was unable to make any promise."

"Lorédan, I am again conjecturing, and do not know everything."

"He asked me to give him the hand of Rita in marriage! . . . Edward, admire me, I am yet alive! . . ."

Edward took the hand of his friend; a long silence followed the last words of Lorédan, who was overcome by this avowal.

"Lorédan," said Edward, "I knew everything . . . I have been observing Rita ever since that memorable evening when Nizam sang 'The Maiden of Golconda,' on the terrace of the Virginia . . . A man must be able to keep his ears open to everything . . . Rita never loved you, Lorédan."

"You are right, Edward," said Lorédan, with feigned courage.

"My friend we must take women as they are, and remain men, ourselves."

"You, I trust, will be satisfied with me, Edward."

"You say that with a sorrowful air . . . ."

"My thoughts are sad . . . . very sad . . . . to have placed my happiness, my life upon a young girl! and to see every project crumble in an instant! Edward, it seems to me that I shall not survive my despair . . . . but I hope that I will preserve the strength to accomplish my father's mission . . . ."

"Lorédan, you are deceiving yourself; I am not satisfied with you."

"Edward! Edward! there are affections which are never effaced from the memory, and which kill, but slowly. This young girl has passed before me like an ideal apparition. I saw her, as a bright particular star, gleaming upon the horizon of the Indian sea; as I would a woman in a dream, I followed her in silence beneath the arching borders of the Limpid Stream. Often did I watch her first appearance upon the kiosk of the Virginia; and long after she had disappeared, my soul still lingered upon the vines and flowers that had caressed her heavenly form. You know that she never mingled in our conversations, in our pastimes, our evening reunion; I know nothing of her but enchantment and grace, unblemished by any human imperfection, nothing which could console me for my great loss, by discovering to me in the future the unhappy moments of after life and the dissipated clouds of illusion. The blissful image alone remains of

an angel, who never revealed to me her mortal side nor the disenchanting features of her character. This, Edward, will be my death! I shall go back to Europe; I will seek distraction and noise and din of cities; this image will follow me; everywhere this graceful form will loom up between the green sea and the azure sky, under the tranquil shade, beside the streamlet's bank, on the shores of the lake, the balcony of a vine-robed mansion, in the atmosphere of a love which floats beneath an African heaven! Yes, I feel it, my weakness will not bear up against the remembrance. This will haunt my nights and disturb my days; it will course through my veins like a moral poison which spares the wretch from the crime of suicide and causes him to die before his hour, but innocent before God."

"Lorédan," said Edward, after a pause, "I am a little older than you are; many years older, ten years, and ten years of wandering among men! I have, then, my friend, the right to tell you that I have seen men living who were more miserable than you."

"But those that are dead, you have not seen . . . . And for that matter, Edward, all this is useless; let us have no more of it. I had to tell you these sad thoughts, I have told them once, and I will not repeat them. It is absurd to trace at present, for an incredulous friend, the history of the future . . . . Let us leave my affairs, and talk a little of your own . . . . With your active good sense, you have, by this time, planned your career, dear Edward . . . . Speak at your ease, and do not allow my affliction to oppress you . . . . The sorrows of love are the only sorrows that friendship cannot comprehend . . . . Think but of my

love for my father . . . ; that affection is pure, and I confess that to-day we are celebrating my feast day . . . For the sake, then, of my noble father, I am able to allow myself a few moments respite, to take refuge beneath the shadow of consolation . . . Tell me, Edward, with your native good humor, what you are going to do with your future."

"I shall lead a burgher's life, one such as I lately sketched for you. I am permitted, I trust, to build castles in Spanish Africa, to dream of the foundation of a colony and of the ideal fortune of Palmer. I will enter upon the full exercise of my rights; and, upon the shores of the Arabian gulf, will supplement the 'Thousand and One Nights.' It will be necessary to break the monotony of my citizen life! To begin, then, I am to be married; I will wed the woman whom I would have chosen among ten thousand, and who, by isolating herself here, has spared me the embarrassment and the uncertainty of a choice. We will be married at Ceylon or at Cape-Town, and, later, be finally installed here, at the Virginia. I will establish a plantation in the neighborhood of the beautiful port I discovered, and to which I have given your name. I will associate myself with my brother-in-law, Willy; and together, we will amass an immense fortune. I will travel to England, to show London to my wife and to present her to some of the honorable remains of my family. This for a bit of conjugal tact. The marriage of my friends has taught me experience, and that is so much gained at starting. My wife will grow sick here over strange fancies about voyages to Paris or London, and I will become the most miserable of men. Thereupon I

will take the initiative; and during the six winter months envelop my angel in London charcoal or a Parisian fog. Imagine, if you can, Elmina's despair. She will sigh to me again and again for her beautiful trees, her stars, her African sun, her lake, her Duke, and her Jemidar, her aviaries, her bees and all the treasures of her childhood. Again, I will feign to do myself violence, and, as it were in an excess of conjugal affection, I will restore all to her. On my return, I will remain unmolested by any further whims about travels, and my life will move on quietly in its orbit of azure and gold. At times, I will look spleenish and say to her, with a sigh, as false as an English tenor:

"Oh, my sweet love, my Elmina! I would give you a thousand pounds of ivory and emeralds to be once again with you beneath the fifth arch of London Bridge, and admire the absence of the sun setting upon the black varnish smoke that decorates the stairway of Somerset palace!"

"And again, what happiness to go once more to hear Atwood discoursing in the Commons! to read, in manuscript, an article by Peterson upon the felling of forests in New Holland, where there are no forests! to admire the latest scenery, at Drury Lane, in the new opera, for which Willis, by dint of paste, has painted the lake and shades of Tinnevely! . . . Fancy, if you can, dear Lorédan, my sweet Elmina's anger! I already feel the impress of her pretty fingers upon my face; I am the very fool of my own happiness, when I think of the charming scenes of this domestic inner life; of which, notwithstanding what you may say of it, my friend, I ardently hope that you

will be the single witness, and that you will intercede in my favor to appease the innocent wrath of Elmina."

"Edward, be happy, for you deserve it . . . . Leave me to my destiny . . . . I will never again see the Virginia, never again see Rita. You shall point out to me the road to the virgin port of which you spoke; there I will await the passage of a ship; for off that point lies the great ocean highway from the Arabian gulf to Madagascar and the Cape. Willy will furnish me with a number of his servants. After the manner of shipwrecked people, we will signal passing vessels, by building fires upon the shores. On reaching a neighboring commercial port, I will put myself in communication with Willy, and, to further my labors, I hope, Sir Edward, that you will second me in this. I count largely even upon your remaining piasters to pay my passage, and return to the port to which you have given my name. I have foreseen everything, you perceive, that was to the interest of my father, to my own and to that of Jonathan. The only commercial transaction into which I shall enter will not discover the bay of Agoa to the ship aboard which I will return; this bay shall still preserve its incognito, according to the ancient and venerable vow of Jonathan. Although my own interests engross me, I would not wish to compromise those of my benefactors."

"Lorédan, your plan is a wise one, and I see nothing in it of which I cannot approve. I do not, however, think it would be altogether proper to leave old Jonathan without bidding him good-bye and shaking his hand."

"Edward, I again appeal to your resourceful ingenuity. Will you bring about what you wish . . . . Do you then

believe, Edward, that I could further support a meeting with Rita, her face beaming with joy and love before her Willy? Oh! I feel that my heart would break into fragments at the sight; the very idea swells the veins in my neck, covers my tongue with bitter moisture, stirs a fever in my temples and burns the very roots of my hair! No; I do not wish to see anybody; I would die that moment, and I have too many sacred duties to perform to die yet! Edward, you will render me one service more, will you not? . . . . Tell him sincerely the history of my life and that of my father; this will be better than subterfuge. Jonathan has the heart of a father; he will understand me, and will excuse me."

"Is your mind permanently settled upon all the details of this resolution, Lorédan?"

"Irrevocably."

"You do not wish to see again either the Virginia, or Jonathan, or? . . . ."

"I wish to see nobody henceforth but you, Edward . . . . These are my last instructions. You will tell Rita that it was you who saved her life; you will tell Willy that Rita is not my sister; you will tell Jonathan that I shall be grateful to him till death, and that I will hasten from the ends of the earth, if he requires my arm or my life. Hide from everybody the delirium of my love, that my misery may not, for an instant, disturb the harmony of the Virginia."

"God forbid, Lorédan, that I should go counter to one of these noble thoughts: they are all of a piece; all tend to one worthy end, and I will be only too happy to second you. Re-read my letter of the other day, and you will see

that I have already given you mysterious consolations. The love of Willy and Rita was known to me, and I foresaw the issue. I have but one thing to say to you, and in this I wish to be obeyed. Will you obey me?"

"But . . . ."

"No but; *but* is no answer."

"I will obey you."

"Very well, then, Lorédau! Take this paper . . . . take it . . . . I wrote it the first day of the elephant hunt . . . . in the forest of mimosas. I was, as is my custom, about to die the following day; and, as is my wont, I did not die. I told you then that I was sketching a portrait of the lion for Elmina; I was deceiving you. Take this paper . . . ."

"Edward, this paper is your testament; it is a gift of the estate of your aunt, Mrs. Kellet. I know the paper . . . ."

Edward shook upon his cavern couch, as if the earth had quaked within this granite alcove.

"In the name of God! how did you come by that knowledge?" cried he. "This paper has never left my person."

"It was an indiscretion on my part, of which I humbly accuse myself, my friend. I read this paper while you were asleep."

"Well and good! for a moment I thought you were a wizard! I prefer to know that you are but a person who has been indiscreet: this is more natural and less terrifying . . . . You know all about it, then . . . . Now, this testament will dispense with the transaction of your contemplated operations; it forthwith puts you in possession of good silver coin, the only worth that stills the cry of hideous creditors. Your delicacy need not take alarm at my

proposition, I will reimburse myself with my own hands, here, from Willy's coffers. This will enable you to gain very precious time, will it not?"

"Edward, you are a treasure of kindness. Give me your hand. I accept your offer."

"Egad, man! I am glad you do accept it. It is I that am under obligations in this transaction. You relieve me of the embarrassment of inheritors . . . . You will arrange the transfer with my notary, in my native land; and I, a commercial sybarite, will have nothing to do but to heap up the stacks of piasters which some agent or other casts upon the quay of Port de Gessin!"

"Admirable even to the end! Edward . . . . Yes, yes, since you wish it, it is I who do you the good turn on this occasion."

"But it seems to me that it is very clear, Lorédan . . . ."

"Very clear, Edward."

"To-morrow, when you awake, speak to Willy, Lorédan, explaining your position. Since you authorize me to explain it to the uncle, begin you with the nephew; Willy will select his most intelligent followers for your service; these will be your guides, and, in fifteen hours, at your winged pace, you will reach Port de Gessin. When I shall have seen Jonathan and my Elmina, I will pay you a visit on horseback, for I do not think that your signal will bring you a vessel the first day . . . ."

"Edward, I accept your visit, on condition that you make no mention of Rita. Let this name be pronounced here for the last time . . . ."

"You shall be obeyed, Lorédan. The suppression of this name in our conversations will, I hope, be the first step towards forgetting her . . . ."

"What creole giddiness!" said Lorédan, with a voice that hissed through his teeth in rage; "what a foolish young woman! She meets a savage in the desert, and she loves him; or, at least, she thinks she does!"

"Ah! Lorédan, my friend, in the desert there are natural laws which, without our being aware of the fact, determine our inclinations. If a system of physiology can give you any consolation, the one that I will submit to your consideration, before we fall asleep, is not to be despised. Lorédan, our species, when brought back to the primitive state, obeys the great and sovereign law of the mingling of races. This, too, we find in the Bible. The Jews loved the women of the Gentiles, when they dwelt among them, and they left their Egyptian wives. In India, we see this oriental system confirmed by a thousand examples. At the end of this century, Europe shall have espoused Asia, and both will have gained by the union. The old world will never regain her youth, except by some such nuptials. On both sides, there is much progress made in this direction. Here, in this little corner of the earth, as soon as our young Willy saw Rita, a girl of French and Spanish blood, he had two reasons for loving her at first sight, and the young lady was forced to obey the same instinct. It is not her fault: there is a law governing these inclinations. After this instance pardon me, Lorédan, if I cite another; that of myself, although it is not exactly according to the rigor of the law, since Elmina and myself, by our forefathers, are sprung from the same blood. But, at the Virginia, we found ourselves face to face, and complete strangers to one another: the young creole distinguished the European in me . . . . My fatuity would be without excuse, were she not justified by the

exactions of a system of physiology. Thus, Lorédan, you will pardon this too personal reference. Modesty must give place to science."

"Edward," said Lorédan, with a voice full of melancholy,—“Edward, your system may be all very good; but what amuses the fancy does not quiet the heart."

"In that case," said Edward, composing himself for sleep, "let us try to sleep; in every system of physiology, there is a dose of opium; profit by it, and thank me when you have had a good sleep."

A general silence followed this conversation. The light step of Nizam, as he went his rounds with an eye upon his sentinels, was scarcely audible in the gloom. In the absence of all danger the luxury of this precaution was unnecessary: but Nizam was a man of prudent habits, and his eyes were ever about him whether on friendly ground or hostile territory.

The stars were going down to their setting, when Nizam sounded the *réveil*, and the hunters forthwith took the road home. We will not follow them on their homeward march, for it was marked by no incident worthy of interest. It is almost unnecessary, even, to state that, at the top of the port to which Sir Edward had given the name de Gessin, Lorédan, who had a long conversation with Willy, separated from the party with an escort of five Makidas savages.

By a privilege which the stage must concede to history, we will shift the scenery of this act, and transport ourselves to the balcony of the belvedere surmounting the Virginia, where two young girls are seated, engaged in a conversation as charming as the music of two birds in the top of a banana tree.

## CHAPTER XIX

## ARRIVAL IN PORT.

THE sun was but two hours above the horizon. A fresh breeze, blowing from the neighboring lake, was playing in the folds of the banner that floated from the top of the Virginia. Rita and Elmina, in the graceful pose of creole nonchalance, were watching the summit of the Red Mountain as if they thought to see the sun of night arise behind it.

"Oh! they are very late, really," said Rita, crushing a handkerchief of Chinese lace in her hands,—“our poor hunters are very late! Only think, night will soon be upon us . . . I dislike the night when I am sad.”

“My dear Rita,” said Elmina, throwing her arm around her friend’s neck, “I have spent many cruel hours upon this balcony . . . Ah me! we are always waiting here for some poor creature in the midst of danger; such is our lot! . . . But I have never suffered so much as to-day . . . Here . . . within my temples that are on fire . . . I have a presentiment . . .”

"Dearest Elmina, Captain Jonathan, your venerable uncle, declared to me as late as this morning: Willy would escape from hell . . . ."

"Willy is not alone, my angel . . . . there are brave people with him who are your friends, and who are not as clever or fortunate as my brother . . . . This delay bodes no good, dear Rita."

"I said a prayer this morning . . . . I prayed for your brother, for Sir Edward and the others . . . . for the poor savages also . . . . This has given me some quiet . . . . I recited the prayer of St. Francis Xavier, apostle of the Indies . . . . It is a prayer my mother taught me, and which inspires my heart with great confidence."

"How happy you are, Rita!"

The two young ladies, at intervals, interrupted their conversation to scan the Red Mountain, from base to summit, with a telescope, which revolved upon a pivot. The lense brought into frightful proximity the most minute details upon the horizon. They could distinctly see the blades of grass stirred by the evening breeze, the gilded flint pebbles upon the mountain side, the deep mouths of the caverns, the eastern vales already darkened by the falling shades of the neighboring heights, the subtile mists rising above the bosom of the lake and distant streams.

Suddenly, Elmina uttered a cry of joy and drew back as if in fear. It appeared to her that her brother Willy started out of the ground a few steps before her very eyes.

Their creole languor instantly gave place to a vivacity all on fire. "There they are!" cried Elmina, clasping Rita, till their dresses of yellow Bengalese silk were rumpled in the close embrace.

Rita in her turn took possession of the observatory, and, as she leaned over the instrument, fixed her eyes upon the hunters. She counted them as they appeared upon the summit of the mountain.

"Yes," she said, "I see your brother; you could recognize him in an army, by his lion like bearing . . . . There is Nizam . . . . Neptunio and Duke . . . . Now comes Sir Edward . . . ."

"But let me look again for a while, dear Rita!" said Elmina, moving Rita's head aside from the eye-piece, with her delicate hand. "Rita, you are very selfish this evening!"

"There, then, look at Sir Edward," said Rita, yielding her place with a slight taunt in her tone.

"Ah! my God! . . . ." cried Elmina, "they are not all there! . . . . they are not all there! . . . . Sir Edward is alone . . . . Look, Rita, look . . . . my eyes are dimmed . . . . look for me, Rita!"

A cold moisture suffused the face of Elmina, and the slender fingers she placed upon the arm of her friend were icy cold.

"I see Willy distinctly, dear Elmina," said Rita, with her eye at the glass; "I see Neptunio as if I were touching him with my finger . . . . I see Nizam . . . . Sir Edward . . . ."

"Alone?"

"Alone . . . . He is looking at the Virginia . . . . you would almost say he could see us . . . ."

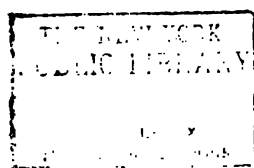
"Rita, is Sir Edward alone?"

"Yes, I tell you, alone, far apart from the others . . . . very far from them . . . . See, there are all the hunters . . . . in one line . . . . a line of black faces . . . . They are all coming down at a very rapid step . . . ."



RITA.

(FROM GILL PHOTO, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.)



"One of our friends, then, is missing!" said Elmina, with a voice that came from her soul.

"Yes, I don't see M. de Gessin . . . Sir Edward looks sad . . ."

"Look well, dear Rita . . . look at all of them, one after the other, in the name of God! . . ."

"Elmina, I am not deceived . . . Now, they have all descended . . . The mountain is perfectly bare . . . M. de Gessin is not with them."

Elmina uttered a piercing cry and fell senseless upon the balcony matting. Rita flung herself upon her friend, and the domestics heard that scream which breaks from a woman's breast at awful moments, chilling man's frame with terror.

When some sad event transpires within the four walls of a house, it appears that external objects manifest it to the passers by. Mute and inanimate objects speak; windows, doors, trees, walls wear a sorrowful expression.

Friends, returning after a journey, from afar, cast anxious looks at the house they have longed for so dearly. They fear to pass its threshold. Every thing tells them that they will not find there, at their return, what they left when departing.

There was in Sir Edward's glance a very quick perception of the mysteries of life, and a little sufficed to enable him to gather much.

Crossing the bridge that spans the western moat, he noticed a number of familiar servants, hastening hither and thither through the lower halls, with the air of people so totally absorbed in their domestic duties as to elicit no attention to what was passing without. It was, indeed,

quite unusual that the return from an expedition of so great moment should excite no manner of curiosity; that even the master of the house, hitherto so punctual in issuing from the enclosure to offer his felicitations to the hunters, should remain invisible on the present occasion and manifest none of that eagerness which was his ordinary welcome. Sir Edward, therefore, held himself in readiness for bad news, although he was not yet well able to determine its nature. He knew enough, however, to arm himself with courage against any fatality, like the soldier who buckles on his armor before he has recognized the face of his enemy.

A voice from within twice called Nizam. The Indian rushed through the door and up the stairs. Willy hurried on after him.

Sir Edward remained alone in the great hall. The body of the hunters sought the tall trees upon the farm, to the west of the mansion.

After an hour had elapsed in this singular delay, during which it was hard to conjecture what was to be expected, Sir Edward saw Nizam enter and motioned him to approach.

"I was looking for you, Sir Edward," said the domestic in a low voice. "You are aware of my devotedness to you; you know, too, that with little difficulty I become acquainted with whatever people try to conceal from me. Well, now, Sir Edward, my master and my countryman, permit me to address you freely and to give you a proof of my attachment."

"Begin, Nizam; let me hear what you have to say," said Sir Edward, with a charm in his smile, and so calm an

expression in his voice, that even from the subtle ear of the Anglo-Indian domestic he succeeded in disguising the interior emotion by which he was agitated.

"Miss Elmina is suffering from a very severe nervous prostration; they called me in to prescribe for her; but, as she manifests no alarming symptoms whatever, I administered a few insignificant remedies, merely for form's sake, and to allay the fears of her uncle. Sir Edward, quite a while back, I told you that Elmina had ceased to be the girl of former days. At our return from the chase, she never failed to meet us and storm us with questions; now, she is always ill when we get back . . . Have you any observation to make, Sir Edward?"

"None, my gallant Nizam."

"You authorize me then to proceed, Sir Edward?"

"I do, certainly. The fact is that I do not see whither you are leading me. You whet my curiosity. Speak quickly; I apprehend some interruption. Let us go more aside, by retiring to the trees upon the terrace; what say you, Nizam?"

The speakers withdrew from the house, crossed the terrace, and were soon lost in the shade of a thick foliage.

"Now," said Sir Edward, "you are at liberty to proceed."

"Sir Edward," said Nizam, opening his big Indian eyes, full of cunning and fire, "Sir Edward, you know that servants see everything, hear everything, but say nothing; and that the day comes when they guess everything. When I saw an American girl and a young Frenchman beneath the same roof, I said to myself: 'This will end in a marriage.' Master Willy, here, did not fail to become enamored of the young Franco-Spaniard; I foresaw that he

would. In India we never see anything but mixed marriages; they have a God for this. My father was an Indian; my mother an English woman. Sir Edward, you notice everything; I am confident this mingling of the races has not escaped your observations . . . ."

"Yes, Nizam, you are right . . . . It has, at times, been the subject of my thoughts . . . . but your preamble is a little long; come to facts."

The voice of Sir Edward lost and regained at turns, as he spoke, its forced calm; a tremendous effort was being exerted within him.

"M. de Gessin," said Nizam, "has closely concealed his play; he feigned to avoid Elmina, and affected to never address her a single word; but, finally, everything is made manifest. He was, actually, in love with Elmina! . . . . And who would not become enamored of Elmina? . . . . Even myself, an old servant, have I not a thousand times kissed the grass that bent beneath her angel step! . . . . Ah! sir, there is a man, at this moment, happier than a god! Elmina loves your friend, M. de Gessin! . . . . Asia would sacrifice its pearls, its ivory and its coral to be this man! I have, for some time, been aware of Elmina's attachment . . . . And to you, Sir Edward, whose conjectures are always correct, to you this affection was then, from what I have heard, a mystery? . . . . Miss Elmina played with you like a child, and coquetted with you charmingly; you did not, however, become her dupe. You are too deeply versed in womankind for that! . . . . You were certain, I am confident, that the man upon whom she would bestow her love, would be he upon whom she would refrain from turning her regards in public . . . .

The panther Elmina! . . . . A single word of Rita's, a word uttered before Captain Jonathan and Willy alone, revealed to all of us the true cause of her ailment. Elmina fainted for grief, upon the balcony of the belvedere, when she observed the hunters returning, without your young friend . . . . She believed him dead and devoured . . . . Yet, at best, I am at a loss to understand M. de Gessin's conduct; his thoughts are all of commerce; he neglects Elmina! All the ivory we have discovered is not worth her little finger! . . . . There is some reason in the saying, the French are fickle-minded! . . . . Your pardon, Sir Edward, for these accusations against your friend; but it is my persuasion that Elmina should not be made to suffer this degree of neglect for a few pounds of dead ivory!"

At this critical juncture, Sir Edward rose to the very height of homely heroism; by force of the greatest energy he triumphed over two of the most inexorable passions that lord it over the human heart—love and self-love.

His noble countenance was lighted by a smile of almost superhuman artifice, which smoothed away upon his features every disturbing frown: even his voice found its natural tones, and deceived Nizam, whose ear, at a hundred paces, would have distinguished the brushing of the colibri's wing against the tiniest blade of grass upon the landscape.

"Nizam," said he, "what you have rehearsed is not news to me: I have been aware of all; your ideas upon the mingling of the races in Asia are quite just; we will celebrate two weddings at the Virginia; it is only a question of time. Now, tell me, my gallant Nizam, what you re-

marked in the language or countenance of Captain Jonathan?"

"The expression of his face, Sir Edward, was singular; and it was in vain that I sought to interpret it . . . . He spoke one sentence to Willy, in a low voice, but I overheard it: '*We must hide everything from Sir Edward.*' It appears, I said to myself, that Sir Edward is not in his friend's confidence; and that, unlike myself, he has failed to notice Elmina's inclination for M. de Gessin. Accordingly, my attachment to a fellow countryman induced me to acquaint you with the mystery shrouding the young couple, that your wisdom might dictate to you what course to pursue under the circumstances . . . ."

"I am thankful for this, my gallant Nizam. I will now see what the Jonathans will say to me . . . . I will take my measures accordingly. We will see each other again, if necessary. Where did you leave them?"

"At Elmina's chamber door. Miss Rita returned to the bedside of her friend, after a few words with Uncle Jonathan. Willy and the Captain conversed in a low voice as I retired. It was to no use, however, for I heard nearly all that was said. The Captain looked the very picture of despair. Oh! it was frightful!"

Edward made him a sign and Nizam, bowing respectfully, withdrew. Alone, Edward indulged in thoughts like these:

"See, here, the recompense of good Captain Jonathan's hospitality! Let anyone bestow hospitality hereafter! Desolation has entered this house, and with us! What a return for gratitude! Oh! serenity must, at every price, be restored to the white hairs of this old man; it is a

sacred duty! Jonathan has not yet communicated to Elmina my proposal of marriage. Evidently, for he was awaiting our return from the expedition. If God aids me, all will be happily arranged; as to myself, I will set the example of abnegation; we shall see later whether friendship will comprehend me!"

It was growing late.

Edward had gained the middle of the terrace, and with disguised impatience awaited the appearance of Captain Jonathan. When he saw the Captain descending the perron, he advanced to meet him with a light step, masking every expression but that of a moderate grief which it was easy to construe into a tender concern over the indisposition of Elmina. As soon as he was at arm's length, Sir Edward took Jonathan's hand, addressing him in his mildest way:

"I hope, Captain Jonathan, that the indisposition of your charming niece will have no serious consequences."

"She has experienced great emotions . . . of joy . . . at the sight of her brother Willy," said Jonathan, with an embarrassment in his bearing, gesture and in the command of his features, which could not escape Sir Edward.

"I am guilty of a grave sin against you, Captain Jonathan," said Sir Edward, raising his hand to his mouth, then dropping it at full length by his side.

Jonathan drew back a step, throwing himself into an attitude of inquiry.

"Yes, I am very culpable in your sight, and it is high time I accuse myself. I have deceived you, Captain . . . I was forced to yield to the imperious exigencies of friendship . . . A friend in the desert is a brother, a father, a

whole family; when he commands, we must obey blindly; this is what I have done . . . . M. de Gessin had a sacred duty to fulfill, a filial duty . . . . his heart was divided between two affections. He loved a woman; he loved his father. My friend dared not meet his destiny in the most delicate affair of his life; he feared to sound an uncle's fatherly intentions with regard to the most charming of nieces; he has, accordingly, charged me with this care. It is strange, unheard of, and, it may be, revolting in your eyes. Hence, I accuse myself of it as of a fault before the sacred authority of your white hair. One thing only attenuates the nature of my guilt; Miss Elmina is unacquainted with my advances; she is in complete ignorance of everything. Except between you and me, there has been no question of marriage. My friend wished to know from you whether the hand of your niece was free, and, your answer once given, his whole thought will centre upon his father, whom no concern can induce him to neglect. Forget, now, Captain Jonathan, everything which has hitherto passed between you and me; there is no further question of a man of thirty-seven, wasted by heat and travel; no longer question of an Englishman who claims the hand of the American lady who is your niece; but a young man, a Frenchman, a heroic navigator, who a thousand times has ventured his own life to save that of a beloved parent; it is M. de Gessin who solicits the honor of being admitted into your family, and who, this very night, twelve miles from here, is awaiting your answer."

Sir Edward grew more and more able in this delivery of himself, as he perceived that, at every word he uttered, *the face of the old patriarch gradually regained its wonted serenity.*

"Sir Edward," said the old man with an emotion which betrayed itself in his trembling hands, "your fault has proved hurtful to nobody. I awaited your return from the expedition to address my niece; she is acquainted with nothing of any moment. My nephew, Willy, was guilty of a gross crime against you, Sir Edward . . . he told me everything . . . and you, although his angry bullet had driven an ugly rent in your hat, you thought but of saving his life! Let us talk no more then of faults, but of mutual forgiveness. M. de Gessin is, indeed, very timid; I judged as much; you are bold as befits a gentleman who has traveled much, Sir Edward, and it was through the devoted sincerity of your friendship that you had recourse to this subterfuge . . . I understand your conduct; you sought to keep Elmina in sight for your friend's sake . . . The fact is, that here, in the desert, we are not rigorously bound by the principles of the world. You are fond of originality, Sir Edward; I like it, myself, as you see by my inclination for this life of the hermit-planter. To be candid with you, I do not at this moment, when I ought to say everything, apprehend the remotest obstacle to this union, and I may make bold to say that I would give half the years yet in store for my old age, to now clasp the hand of your friend, M. de Gessin."

"Not one word more, Captain. Saddle Spark and bid Elphy follow me."

"Sir Edward, the night is coming on fast; wait till morning . . ."

"Not a minute . . . Are the two young ladies recovered from their shock?"

"Willy has satisfied Rita about her brother . . ."

"Enough for me. Captain, in a twinkling, I will gather together my light baggage and desk; shake hands with you and Willy; mount Spark, and, an hour later, be by the side of my friend Lorédan. This, you know, Captain Jonathan, is the life I like; to depart, travel, return and set out anew! Give me my proper element!"

Jonathan bowed his assent; and, a while later, everything was ready to the desires of Sir Edward.

Elphy was proudly conspicuous upon the terrace, frisking about Spark's ears; his joyful, rapid barking indicated the delight he experienced at being associated with his favorite horse in the service of the house.

Nizam dropped the meridional bridge and himself crossed over it to wait for Sir Edward without the enclosure. As soon as the English gentleman made his appearance, Nizam said to him, with a heartrending expression of voice:

"Sir Edward, I have understood; think of me; do not abandon me; give me the liberty of the sea!"

"Nizam," said Edward, bending down to his horse's mane, "to-morrow I will wait for you, at midday, at the bay of Agoa, under the palm tree where I hung on Elphy's neck the bracelets which I sent to Elmina."

And, like two flashes, the horse and dog shot forward in the direction of the Limpid Stream.

The sudden plunge of a horse is like a delirium; it leaves the brain but one idea, a fixed idea which nothing is able to unsettle. Along the route, Sir Edward indulged in a lengthy monologue upon this single theme:

"A righteous man is often forced to deceive to attain a good object, as another would to further a wicked end: *This is a desolate thought!*"

Reaching the bay of Agoa, he turned northward, casting along the ocean.

Elphy sprang forward in advance to discover that which Sir Edward sought in the service of the house.

An extraordinary barking, mingled with howlings, resounded between the waste of ocean on the one side and the solitude of the forest on the other. The horseman put his right hand on his holster, keeping his eye steadily fixed upon the gloom, deeper than night, that shrouded the woodland. He could not, for the darkness, distinguish ten steps ahead. Elphy still prolonged his almost human and deep-voiced lamentations; he was far in advance, so far that, at Edward's call, he did not return, which led the traveler to fear that he had risen some formidable beast, which had been attracted by the horse's galop. At last, after sweeping around the foot of a mountain which ran out into a promontory towards the sea, Edward descried an immense signal fire, so well fed that its flames shot upward till they seemed to mingle with the bright light of the stars. Elphy had drawn up before this spectacle which was so novel to him, and by his distressful baying sought, at a distance, to warn his friend Spark. But the valiant brute did not hesitate to hurl himself alongside the fire, when he saw Edward spur his horse in that direction.

A few instants later, the two friends were shaking hands, by their wild bivouac.

Edward assumed his habitual ease of expression, giving his horse to the first domestic that met him:

"My dear Lorédan," said he, "I congratulate you on your improvised camp. You have not been losing your

time. Isn't your harbor a pretty one? This site recalls the roadstead of Ajaccio and the imperial mountains of Corsica . . . . You did not expect me at this hour, did you, Lorédan?"

"On the contrary, I did expect you, Edward," returned Lorédan, with the calm of a man who has taken a determination.

"Ah! you were expecting me? thanks for your confidence . . . ."

"The barking of the dog and the galop of the horse confirmed my surmises . . . . At sunset, I descried a sail upon the horizon. Sir Edward, I said to myself, has been looking out upon the sea from the top of Honing-Clip, and will hasten to bid me farewell, lest to-morrow he miss me."

"You reasoned very justly, Lorédan."

"My black men are a great help to me; they will keep up that tremendous fire all night. At sunrise, I expect to embark. Providence has favored me beyond my hopes, for, instead of languishing here, as I feared, I will probably sail to-morrow."

"Very good, then!" said Edward, with a superb tranquillity, "we will go together."

Lorédan's face, lighted by the bright glare of the camp fire, expressed an astonishment which no artist has yet conveyed to canvass.

"You leave, you, Sir Edward!" cried the young man with an unheard of accent.

"I, too, am going . . . . See, here . . . . My English traveler's luggage. I would hardly carry this bachelor's truck with me to bid you good-bye."

"And your wedding, Edward?" asked Lorédan with a

more and more confused expression. "And your wedding, Edward?"

"My wedding! bah! It has gone to join its fellows in nothingness."

"You will not marry Miss Elmina!"

"I will not marry her. It is a fatality attached to my name. I told you of it a thousand times, Lorédan . . ."

"But this is incredible! . . ."

"Lorédan, I withdrew . . . At the moment when everything was to be concluded, I feared . . . A person is not courageous at will . . . Marriage is the most terrible of domestic enemies."

"Indeed! I believe then that marriage has always escaped you, if you always acted as you do now! After this fashion, Edward, a thousand matches might prove a failure; your bachelorhood is no longer a surprise to me."

"So matters stand, Lorédan."

"How do you make your loyalty square with this conduct?"

"What a strange question, Lorédan! How is this? When you should feel delighted that I am to accompany you, when we should mutually congratulate each other upon the good fortune which enables us to leave together the shores upon which we were cast together, you assume a tone of crushing severity, and one which makes me doubt your friendship!"

"I was thinking of that unfortunate old man, of the noble Captain Jonathan, our benefactor, our very father; of how that excellent gentleman had set all his life's happiness upon a young girl, and how ignominiously he finds himself deceived by you! . . . Sir Edward! this is fright-

full it is not honorable! it is unworthy of an Englishman!"

"You are singular, my dear Lorédan. Have you, like myself, sounded the depths of the abyss of marriage? It is far better to make sage reflections upon the edge of the precipice than at the bottom."

"It is better to make them before deceiving an old man! . . . Let me hear, Sir Edward; tell me something about Jonathan; how did he receive your declaration? Give me, I pray you, some details about your last interview; it must have been very honorable to you, Sir Edward?"

"Oh! I must admit that poor Jonathan is plunged in the bitterest grief."

"How coolly he says it!"

"Well, how do you wish me to say it? I will, if you prefer, assume another tone, but you will find the same meaning."

"What coolness! One word more in the same tone, Sir Edward, you have said nothing of Miss Elmina . . ."

"Miss Elmina, my dear Lorédan, is unwell; but Nizam will cure her."

"This is too bad, Sir Edward; you are losing your heart! . . . Miss Elmina, an angel of grace, sweetness and beauty! . . ."

"Yes, there I agree with you; but I would be obliged to wed her for a lifetime, dear Lorédan: and angels, unfortunately, have an eternal existence."

"Sir Edward, I no longer recognize you: your expressions are odious! What! was it not yourself who declared to me, one day, that it would be necessary to marry Elmina,

even at a sacrifice, if by this we could bring joy to the old age of Jonathan, our benefactor?"

"I did say that, it is true; nor do I retract my words . . . . Would you not, then, Lorédan, in my place, have acted as I have?"

"Have you, really, the hardihood to put me that question?"

"Would you have married, Elmina, Lorédan?"

"What a question!"

"Would you have married her, if you did not love her?"

"But, Edward, did you not tell me, again, that love is the more lasting and the more ardent the later it comes?"

"True; I did, also, say that, my dear Lorédan. You have a good memory; mine, too, is excellent, and I now recall a declaration you made to me: '*I would come from the ends of the earth to offer my arm or my life to Jonathan.*'"

"I do not deny my words, Edward."

"Well now, my dear Lorédan, allow me to make a supposition . . . . If, at this hour, you, hitherto smitten with Rita, were told that Jonathan is in despair before his niece who is in tears; that Jonathan, upon the threshold of the tomb, has cast his eyes upon you as the guardian and spouse of his niece, and that he calls upon you, not for your strength or your life, but for a marriage contract with his niece Elmina; tell me, Lorédan, speak candidly, what would you do?"

"I would not hesitate an instant; I would obey the will of my benefactor, the will of the old man who has saved the life and the honor of my father; I would hush every profane voice within my soul, I would marry Elmina."

"You would marry Elmina, Lorédan? Reflect well upon it!"

"Edward, I call the virgin waters of this gulf, whose baptism ought not to be a lie; I call these deserts in which God, for my sake, has changed rocks into ivory, to bear me witness! I would marry Elmina."

"Well, then! Lorédan, this Elmina whom you have yourself called an angel of grace, sweetness and beauty, this Elmina loves you, she is yours!"

Lorédan uttered a low deep cry and joined his hands upon his forehead.

"Yes," continued Sir Edward solemnly, "yes, Elmina loves you; like yourself, I call upon the waters of the gulf and these deserts of God to be my witness! This is the reason why I am here."

After a pause, long enough to respect the surprise and meditation of his friend, Sir Edward recounted to him all that had happened at the Virginia before and after sunset, weaving into his narration the circumstances of his duel with Willy.

"With what innocent and friendly perfidy you have conducted this affair, dear Edward!" said Lorédan, in a tone of the sweetest reproach, "how blindfold I walked into your well laid snares . . . But you did not, then, love Elmina, that you sacrificed her with so light a heart?"

"Recall to mind, Lorédan, that famous advice you received from me in my last letter: it was to prepare you for the unfortunate issue of your love. That counsel I, to-day, offer to myself. I become ten years older; and from the depths of the future, placing myself beneath other skies, on the banks of other streams, in the midst of other affections, I look back, and behold the events of to-day as an atom within the abyss of the past. There is no love pang

of which we cannot discourse tranquilly ten years after. Well! I have done myself the violence to do, to-day, what I must do one day or other: I have stolen my future from the treasury of time."

"But I am not gifted with your philosophy, Edward.... Let me breathe.... I am stifling beneath the oppression of this crushing surprise!.... How, Edward, with your experience were you thus taken at fault?"

"Ah! my friend, what manner of question do you put me? This is the way it happened.... Alas! we are permitted to waste but one life upon this globe; if there were two existences at our disposal, I would have devoted one to the study of man, and the other I would have exhausted in an investigation of woman. As we are situated, however, it becomes impossible to prosecute these two studies simultaneously.... But, let us not stop to speak of me, Lorédan. You are aware of my situation; let this suffice to tranquilize you on my account. There are chemical processes through which new medals grow old, beneath the deluded eyes of learned numismatologists, and there are moral processes through which despair takes on old age and is made to wear the mask of consolation. Look at my face, as an antiquary observes a false medal, and deceive yourself like an old *savant*. Forget me; think of yourself; this is essential. Jonathan is waiting for you."

"Oh! dear Edward, do not, in the name of God, demand the impossible at my hands! So many efforts are above the courage of man.... Edward, I will do as I have said; but I need a whole night to prepare to re-enter that house from which I had permanently excluded myself."

"He makes me beg him to see Elmina! This is my idea of a reprobate refusing to enter paradise! . . . Our humanity has no common sense."

"Moreover, Edward, before any other arrangement, I must remain here until daybreak . . . The sacred interests of my father . . ."

"Stop there! I have arranged all that. Those interests are, to-day, my interests. You should recall to mind that I left the Virginia with no intention of returning; my baggage attests this. Our parts have been changed; I depart, you remain. I am going to cross those two streams which separate me from England. During my voyage I will fit out a vessel for Port de Gessin, gather together my last inheritance, go to France, see your father, and I promise to bring him here to you. Do not allow your delicacy to take alarm! At my return, you will be rich, and will reimburse me for my expenses. Lorédan, my plan is immutably fixed, and, in advance, I suppress upon your lips every species of contradiction."

Lorédan willingly resigned himself to his friend by an expressive gesture. He was, above everything, impressed by the thought of the duel with Willy.

"Now," added Sir Edward, "since you will not return to the Virginia until to-morrow, we must not suffer our benefactor, Jonathan, to pass an unpleasant night. Here is my desk; drop a letter to him. This signal fire will afford you as much light as the sun. We must not do things by halves, Lorédan. Listen attentively: nobody at the Virginia is aware of your love for Rita; and Rita, be sure of it, will not betray you: hers is a noble soul; she yet believes that you saved her life. Before the others, she

will ever remain your sister; she has kept the secret religiously; she will preserve it as long as you shall deem it proper. Hence, in your letter, Lorédan, you must not allow the faintest expression to escape, which should lead them to suppose that this marriage is a sacrifice. You must be generous and grand to the end. Without affecting a love which you do not yet feel, let your expressions be delicate and tender, full of reserve and modesty. In a word, conform to the idea which Jonathan has already conceived of your character. The man who is honored with the hand of Elmina, and makes good old Jonathan's heart bound with joy, it matters little what be the state of his mind, must not write like a victim that is led to the altar of sacrifice."

"Edward, I think I have entered into the true meaning of your thoughts . . . You shall judge for yourself; meanwhile my pen will follow the dictate of your counsels."

Lorédan took the desk, sat down and penned a letter to Jonathan.

The letter finished, Edward read it with scrupulous attention, and said: "Very good! this will do; Jonathan will rest quite contented. You have admirably succeeded in your petition for her hand which I had already secured for you."

Edward put the letter into its envelope, sealed it with his arms; afterwards, securing it in a little net of ribbons, he hung it upon Elphy's neck. Pointing out the road to the Virginia, he said to him: "Elphy, bring this letter to Jonathan."

The dog howled for joy and plunged forward along the path.

The two friends, accustomed to sleep or rest with one eye upon the stars, threw themselves upon the velvety sward of the virgin port, postponing, until morning, the sad feelings of parting.

Before the rising of the sun they were up. Lorédan did not speak a word; upon the face of Sir Edward there was the serene expression of a man prepared to walk upon the sea.

The last stars were yet beaming on high when the two friends took each other's hands.

"Go to Jonathan, my friend," said Sir Edward; "I go to your father. Entertain no concern for me. Lead back your servants; I am to-day expecting Nizam beneath a palm tree at Agoa. He will be my comrade. We will speak of you, of Jonathan and of the others . . . . I have taken upon myself a mission; I have regained my liberty, and will again pursue the itinerary of my destiny. Should the vessel upon the horizon fail me to-day, Providence will send me one to-morrow; I count upon it, for it is right."

Soon the echoes of Port de Gessin resounded to the well known command: *Forward! Forward!*

When the sun was up, Sir Edward was alone, and, when alone, he allowed the tears to moisten his cheeks. There is no shame in the desert.

A few hours afterwards, Sir Edward and Nizam were on their voyage to Europe, aboard the providential *Dauphin*.



## CHAPTER XX

## EPILOGUE.

THEY were both very sad, and mingled little with the passengers. Incurable sadness is an enemy to light conversation, and holds the talkative at a distance.

Upon the deck of a vessel, despair induces dangerous vertigos, a simple wooden parapet separates life from death.

Sir Edward had courage enough, however, to suffer him to live; but, when it is so easy to die, it not unfrequently happens that, in pursuit of some fatal phantom which, in the guise of pleasure, allures us, we abandon ourselves to the impulse of sudden excitement.

Nizam, who understood every feature of his master's silence, saw but two things—the deep sea and Sir Edward; these he watched; for even to the end, on land or sea, he was determined to perform his duties as a faithful servant.

Around them were grouped a number of Indians in listless and meditative attitudes. Their costume, bearing an expression, forcibly suggested those old Greek philoso-

phers who go from isle to isle in their flower-crowned triremes, teaching wisdom to the nations.

These men spoke in low, soft sounds, and an indefinite charm hung about their words when they discoursed of the things of the universe, in a language as colored as the light of India and as harmonious as the waves of Coromandel.

The Nestor of this group of philosophers and wanderers was rehearsing an Indian tale, whose introduction had already so far gained the attention of Sir Edward and Nizam, that they were forced to make a truce with their despair.

This was what the Indian sage was telling.

"At Tchina-Patnam there lived an Indian whose name was called Arzeb. His fame was very great for virtue.

"Sometimes he forgot to tell the grains of his *poitah*, but never did Arzeb fail to stretch out his hand to the unfortunate.

"His strength was growing feeble upon his bed of death; he longed for life, although his soul well knew the blissful home awaiting him amid the gardens of Mandana, where Indra daily walks, the god of the firmament.

"He invoked Sursutee, the goddess, second spouse of Vishnu, and Sursutee appeared before him upon her favorite tiger, with a branch of maguey in her hand.

"'Divine spouse of the blue god!' cried Arzeb, 'grant one favor to the most fervent worshiper of the ten incarnations!'

"'What is thy favor?' the goddess asked.

"'That ten years be added to my days.'

“‘It is impossible! my son,’ Sursutee answered him. ‘Thy days were numbered at thy birth. Thou must die when the first ray of the sun falls upon the pagoda of Williakarmia, and already the dawn is lighting the eastern sky.’

“‘That ten days be added!’ Arzeb prayed with folded hands.

“‘I can grant thee but one day,’ the goddess answered him; ‘and this, because by it the order of the universe will not be confused. One day shall be added to thy years, for thou wert wise and good; but remember, that with its close, thou must hasten hither to die;’ and Sursutee vanished from his sight.

“Arzeb, who felt that he was dying, arose slowly, dressed himself, and performed his ablutions, saying: ‘This is a new life that is beginning for me; let me profit by it nor waste it.’

“He met a brahmin and the brahmin said to him:

“‘Arzeb, if thou dost wish to write the history of Aureng, the glorious founder of the Mahratte empire, I will give to thee a field of betel, a *chatiram* with a palm tree grove and six ounces of gold.’

“‘Life is short,’ Arzeb answered him, ‘I have no time to write histories; I must live; suffer me to pass on.’

“A man of battles, who was recruiting soldiers, said to him:

“‘Arzeb, our victorious emperor prepares to war upon a little king of Elephanta; wilt thou grasp thy bow and thy quiver?’

“‘How foolish!’ Arzeb answered him, ‘to kill men who must die! I will not be the valet of death.’

"A father of a family, to whom there were nine daughters, most beautiful in stature and fair as richly gilded bronze, said to Arzeb:

"'To thee will I make over my youngest daughter and two elephants.'

"'I have no time to marry,' Arzeb answered him; 'I must pray to the blue god. Thy two elephants would annoy me overmuch: the burden of my life is even now heavy to excess, without that two elephants be added thereto.'

"The father of the family was much incensed that he refused his daughter, and placed the thumb of his right hand upon his nose, and shook his four fingers, and this, in India, is a mortal insult. Arzeb answered him:

"'Life is short; I have no time to take my revenge.'

"A man of letters spoke to Arzeb:

"'My learned Arzeb, thou art invited by the brahmins of Tchina-Patnam to pass with them five days in the Black Hall, that thou mayest discover the causes of the eclipses and write a book.'

"Arzeb answered him:

"'May eclipses have what cause they wish, it is all the same to me; I do not wish to lock myself up; when I am dead, I will have time sufficient to rest between four walls. Suffer me to breathe the air of the mountain, to behold the indigo sky of celestial Indra.'

"'But,' added the brahmin, 'thou wilt remain ignorant thy whole life.'

"'That will not be long,' Arzeb answered him: 'I will die to-morrow; thyself and the others, after to-morrow.'

"Arzeb had lost a quarter of an hour in making these

answers, and he could not be comforted. 'How precious is time!' he repeated within himself. 'Each instant is like a pearl without price, which drops from my hand into the depths of the river Triplican, and I have few pearls now to drop.'

"And he walked with swiftness into the plain of Tchoultry, which reaches from the mountain of the Armenians to the suburbs of Tchina-Patnam, even to the subterranean temples of Elora.

"Arzeb hurried on like to a man in whose mind was the thought of business or of pleasure; but he had no thought. He sought how he might dispense the pearls of his short existence, and he knew not to whom he should give them.

"He sat down to meditate, between two bushes of yellow tulips, and soon he regretted the time he had devoted to meditation: 'Great Siva!' he cried, striking his forehead above the white streak which distinguishes the followers of this god; 'great Siva, who, in thy incarnation of a dwarf, didst know the race of man, grant me a happy inspiration upon the employment of my time.'

"Arzeb arose, and beheld, upon the farther bank of the river, a delightful chatiram, with colonnades of sandal wood, and alive with the sweet voices of seven brahminesses who were singing the combat of Rama and Ravana, and accompanying themselves upon the bin. These young women called him by his name and made him a sign that he should cross the river. Arzeb answered them:

"'I will lose too much time in crossing, and then I would be obliged to end my life with seven brahminesses who promise much and give nothing.' Arzeb went his way from the brahminesses.

"He met a Jemidar, who said to him :

" 'Arzeb, thou art hungry and thirsty; come to my cabin, yonder, beside the cascade of Elora. I will place before thee a dish of *peomerops*, red *troupials*, ham of the Labiata bear, and thou shalt drink of delicious wampee.'

" 'Dost thou take me for a fool?' Arzeb answered him; 'dost thou think that I will lose my time filling my head and stomach? Here is a poor *baraidje* passing by who is hungry and thirsty; give him to eat and to drink in my place, and take this ounce of gold.'

"Two bayaderes and a strolling minstrel, a *saradacaren*, with a long mandolin, seeing the generosity of Arzeb, drew nigh to him and asked him for an ounce of gold, and offered to dance and to sing the celebrated idyl *Guita-Govinda*, the loves of Krishnâ, the Indian Apollo, and of Radhâ.

"Arzeb gave to them the ounce of gold, and said to the bayaderes that the amours of Krishnâ had made India fruitful, and they were too long to be heard by a man in his agony.

"Now, however, Arzeb perceived that because he refused everything which was offered to him, he was losing much more time than if he would accept some pleasure: but in the expectation of an early death, which ruled all his thoughts, he yearned not in his heart for any delight.

"At the tenth hour of his second life, Arzeb was weary to death.

" 'Brahma!' cried he with a loud yawn, 'O Brahma, how long and dull is life! I am not astonished that thou didst ten times assume the human form to kill time!'

"After this exclamation, he came before the temple of

*Ten-Tauli*, which has two porticoes and is called a wonder among the wonders of Elora.

"He seated himself upon the tail of a monkey, in the shade of the ox Nandy, both cut in one piece from a quarry of granite, and here, in a lazy manner and without appetite, he ate some betel nuts.

"His eyes, looking aside upwards to heaven, revealed to him a painful sight: Arzeb had yet twenty hours to live upon this earth before he would be struck upon the forehead by black Yama, the god of funerals.

"Then he followed the course of those whom weariness kills; he stretched himself upon the sand and slept.

"Arzeb had a magnificent dream. He thought he saw or, more truly, he did see Roudrà, the god of death, who opened the blue gate of the beautiful palace which is called Kailaca, whose porticoes are of precious stones and lead to the gardens of Mandana, alive with bayaderes.

"Siva said to him, he who is the most powerful of the gods:

"'Arzeb, thou hast been just, and I am come that I may reward thee. Thou shalt be king of the Maldives; there are twelve thousand at the entrance of the Arabian gulf; they dwell in grottos of coral and pearl, and in each grotto there is a queen as beautiful as Latchmi, the goddess of pleasure. These twelve thousand queens shall be thy wives, and thou wilt have a floating harem more beautiful than that of the great Sevadjy, the founder of the empire of the Mahrattes.'

"Arzeb, in his dream, descended from the firmament along a ladder of gold and indigo, and when he came to the country of the upper clouds, he beheld his kingdom,

that was like to twelve thousand sea-shells floating beneath an equal number of palm-tufts.

"When he landed among the Maldives, it seemed to him that the ocean was murmuring a heavenly melody as it divided itself into twelve thousand small streams of living and joyous indigo which ran hither and thither through the Maldives.

"With the agility of movement which we have in dreams, Arzeb lightly leaped from islet to islet; and at each bound he saw among the palm-leaves two dark eyes, glowing beneath tresses of flowing ebony, from a face as sweet and golden as that of the beautiful Radhâ.

"Dreams, among other mysterious secrets, cause us to lose all sense of time and space; and Arzeb, when he awoke, had lived, in memory, many years of happiness which he had passed among his twelve thousand queens in the Arabian gulf.

"But again Arzeb came back to a knowledge of his miserable reality when he found himself before the temple of Elora, beneath the shade of Nandy, the ox.

"According to his astronomical calculations, he had slept eight hours; and, were it not for a cursed snake that stung his heel, he would have prolonged for many years more his fantastic pleasures among the islands of the Maldives. Arzeb said with a sigh:

"I have twelve hours to live, and I swear by Proudacoura, that I am very much weighed down with my existence. I have twelve centuries to live, and, if I were not a good and fervent follower of Siva, I would hurl myself from the top of that *Viranda* upon this rock, and release myself from the burden of these twelve hours which are

crushing me. At least,' added he, 'if I could sleep again even unto the end of my days, which will come in twelve hours, I would again see my beautiful but lost kingdom, my queens, and the fresh smooth complexion of my youth in the mirror of the gulf; but, alas! when the need of nature for sleep will return to my eye-lids, I will be dead! Oh! it is well now that I understand the mystery of life!

"We have but pleasures of a moment, and these may be doubtful; we have tedium and sorrow which none will question.

"The best part of our lives is sleep!

"If the blue god, if the heavenly Indra would grant me a third life, I would not take it, unless I could always be asleep.'

"As he finished this monologue, careful to pronounce it syllable by syllable, with an affected slowness, to gain some minutes upon the eternal twelve hours of his remaining existence, he saw passing the bonze of the great pagoda of Nagpour, who had descended from his elephant to kneel before the temple of the Dèś-Aventara, the ten incarnations.

"The name of the bonze of Nagpour was called Dhealy; he had left the rich capital of Bherâr with his train of jemidars who were of both sexes, to visit the peninsula of Bengal, and to conquer the famous chess players of Hindostan.

"Arzeb flung himself down before the bonze Dhealy, and he said to him:

"Ray of the seventh head of Siva! thou who dost assist at the counsels of Indra, thou who didst disarm with a single word the anger of the serpent Ananta, the eternal

serpent, teach me to pass ten hours thus that I be not devoured by weariness.'

"'Dost thou seek from me an alms for distraction?' the bonze asked of him.

"'I ask it of thee upon my knees, O star of Nagpour,' Arzeb prayed to him.

"'Shegmadid, the glorious architect of the temples of Elora, he who hath been mingled with the blood of the gods and traverseth the blue firmament upon the car of Souriah, did always counsel the bonzes to give an alms to the unfortunate,' Dhealy said to him; 'I will give to thee ten hours of a pleasure which will make the chaste Sita envy thee; I consent to play thee five games of chess.'

"Arzeb opened his big eyes, with the look of a man in whom there was greater fear of the remedy than of the evil, and he muttered some unintelligible words which the bonze thought to be thanks that were most profound, thanks that had no words in which to express themselves before him.

"Arzeb was perhaps the only Indian of this learned age in whom there was no knowledge of chess; but he had forgotten, while he dreamed of the Maldives, that the goddess Sursutee, when she gave to him one day longer in which to live, had likewise given him an universal knowledge which he could apply to all things.

"It was only when he was before the chess board that Arzeb felt the knowledge of a chess player to be soon within him, and the sudden revelation of lofty combinations.

"A jemidar has drawn the chess board of the bonze from its sheath of lacquer which was hung, for an honorable decoration, from the neck of the elephant.

"This was a wonderful chess board. The most skilled Chinese workman of the Penjab had, it is said, spent seven years in making this masterpiece of ivory, mother of pearl and ebony.

"The white king was the living image of him who was the reigning monarch of Lahora, who is called Goala-Sing, the lion-shepherd, an emblematical designation in which there was the meaning of courage and goodness in the person of a single man. The black king was known to all the children of the Celestial Empire as the picture of their venerable emperor, the magnificent Fo-Hi, the agricultural monarch, because, by the wonder of his grafting and coupling, he invented two shrubs and three flowers.

"The sixteen pawns of ivory and ebony had been chiseled with a taste which was exquisite; their small eyes shone like two carbuncles; with one foot forward they stood adjusting an arrow of mother of pearl to a bow of filigree and gold.

"The bonze Dhealy had won this chess board in a contest with the little son of Kosroû the Great; of it he was as proud as the temple of Nagpour is proud of its bronze door, the masterpiece of El-Manoussi, the sculptor.

"The two players sat down upon the sand, before the *bas-relief* which represents Iriarte, the cherished elephant of Indra.

"The first pieces had scarcely been moved, when the bonze perceived that he played with one who was the most valiant champion in Asia; but he did not despair to conquer; and, that he might make Arzeb's interest greater in the game, he made him a proposition.

"It mostly happeneth that they, who place something of their fortune upon a game, often make gross mistakes, and lose by their timidity.

"I will play thee for my entire fortune,' Arzeb said, with a smile.

"Is it great? is it little?' the bonze asked.

"A field of rice, a dwelling upon the Triplican, a house at Tchina-Patnam, and a *kattamaram* which maketh voyages from Taragambour, the city of the sea waves, the queen of the Coromandel. These are my titles of property in this grove of sandal wood; they are all clothed with the seal of our grand provost.'

"Take care!' the bonze said: 'dost thou not reserve to thyself anything? Remember that if thou lose, thou wilt be obliged to yoke oxen at Tandigel that thou mayest live; remember thou wilt be poorer than a beraidje or a thresher of rice.'

"Sun of Nagpour,' said Arzeb, 'I have thought of all this.'

"Well then! I,' the bonze said, 'I place against thy fortune a stake much more precious for thee. Listen to me: The architect of the temples of Elora was bitten by a serpent, here, at this very place; the most illustrious among my ancestors was serving at the temple Willi-akarma; he ran with assistance at the cry of the architect, and, crushing upon a flint seven leaves of tody, the tree of benefits, he made an application of them to the mortal wound, and he healed it. When the architect became a god, he appeared to my ancestor, and he said to him: 'From Siva I have received the power of granting to thee and to thy descendants the favor which, once in your lives,

ye shall ask, either for yourselves or for others; even though this favor be to transport to the middle of the plain Tchoultry, the neighboring cascade, which is formed from a tear of the chaste Siva!' Even yet I have not asked aught of the glorious architect; I am greedy of the favor which he has in store for me, and I stake it upon this chess board.'

" 'I accept it!' Arzeb said; 'let us go on.'

"At these words, the elephant Iriarte moved his enormous head, shook his ears, raised his granite trunk majestically above the head of the bonze; and again he resumed his monumental pose and his eternal immobility.

" 'Thou seest,' the bonze said, 'the architect-god wishes, for an instant, to animate his work that he may justify my words.'

" 'Let us go on with our game,' said Arzeb, bowing. 'Ray of Bherâr, I accept thy stake.'

"The domestics, in respect, withdrew.

"And no human eye was witness to this contest to which there was no equal, and which was seen but by the gods of India. Arzeb, by the favor of Sursutee, was instructed from the first move in all the mysteries of the game.

"His head, which was warm with the sun of India, was still further on fire with victorious combinations which burst forth in his mind and sent a gush of joy to his heart.

"As he pushed forward one of his pieces of ivory, it appeared to him that the chess board took enormous dimensions and that an infernal or a heavenly breath animated the figures, and gave to them the height and passions of the men whom they represented.

"In the delirium of his warm passion, he thought he was present at that battle of Rama and Ravana, immortalized in a poem which the sun seems to have written, in letters of pearl, between the island of Ceylon and Cape Coromandel, a splendid field of war for the monsters of Hindostan.

"The chess player beheld himself grow great, in his own eyes, to be of the full size of Aureng-Zeb; he fought for an empire; at the end of his finger he moved an army of giants; he shook the earth beneath the shock of the immense havoc, and he thought he heard around him the applause of all the gods of marble sculptured upon the *bas-reliefs* of the ten temples of Elora.

"The bonze, to whom it had been given to conquer every adversary, the bonze who even *mated* his illustrious brother of the pagoda Djagrenat, trembled with anger and astonishment at each defeat, and, sometimes, seized with a holy respect, he would imagine that his wonderful adversary was Vishnu himself, transformed into a player of chess, by an eleventh incarnation.

"This thought pleased his self-love and prevented him from breaking his forehead in despair against the head of the elephant of granite.

"The sun was falling into the gulf of Bengal, and the life of Arzeb was going out with the sun, at the moment in which a decisive *mate* was securing for him a victory.

"The conquered bonze made his prayer to Siva, and the architect-god came down in an aureole of azure and gold.

"'Bonze Dhealy,' the architect-god said, 'what favor dost thou ask of the blue god?'

"The bonze asked his conqueror Arzeb, who said to him: 'Ask him for me the favor of remaining fifty years more upon this land of delights.'

"'It is granted!' said the architect-god; and he re-ascended to heaven to take his place beneath the palm trees of the garden of Mandana.

"At the same moment, Arzeb felt that life was entering his body, that new blood was circulating in his veins; he kissed the feet of the bonze Dhealy, and made a prayer of thanksgiving to the architect and to Siva.

"'Thou art, then, very fond of life?' said the bonze to Arzeb, 'and what wilt thou do with thy half a century?'

"'I will sleep in order that I may live in dreams, and I will awake that I may play chess,' Arzeb answered him.

"'And thou art reasonable,' the bonze said; 'I believe that life was made only for this. For a weary man two things only are necessary: a bed and a chess board.'"

A little thing is needed to give a wholesome turn to the mortal weariness of which despair is composed. Sir Edward found in this history all the consolations of that noble Indian wisdom, which is as old as the world: he saw life under a different aspect, and he consented to persevere in it.

"Nizam," said he, "my gallant Nizam, we must be resigned to live, not that we may sleep and play chess, but for an end more noble and worthy of you and me."

Four months later, Sir Edward passed over to France, and saved the life and honor of Lorédan's father!

At the Virginia, Willy and Lorédan were married.

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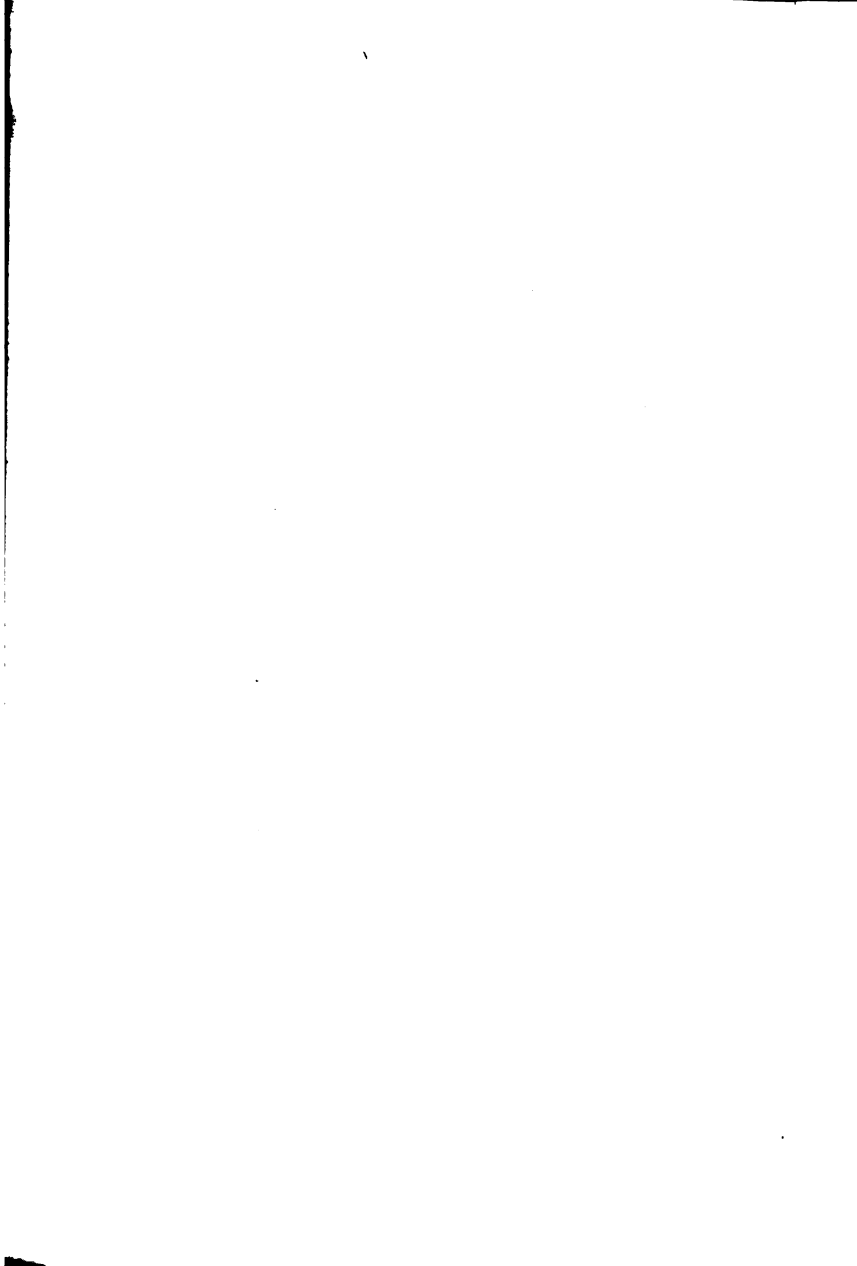
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